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Inferno

FIRST BOOK OF THE DIVINE COMEDY



A new Verse Translation with Introduction and Commentary by

ALLEN MANDELBAUM

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Inferno

The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri

A Verse Translation with Introduction and Commentary by Allen Mandelbaum with Illustrations by Barry Moser

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DANTE ALIGHIERI
Aprile 1919

The Divine Comedy of

Dante Alighieri

A Verse Translation

with Introductions & Commentary by

Allen Mandelbaum

Drawings by Barry Moser

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INFERNO

Part One: Introduction,

Italian Text & Translation,

and Forty-Two Drawings

This translation of the INFERNO *is inscribed to*
Elisa Jane and her generation:

A RIVEDER LE STELLE

INTRODUCTION

Dante is an exiled, aggressive, self-righteous, salvation-bent intellectual, humbled only to rise assured and ardent, zealously prophetic, politically messianic, indignant, nervous, muscular, theatrical, energetic—he is at once our brother and our engenderer.

We may ponder the divide between the modern and the medieval or profess our distance from Dante, but that profession only masks proximities more intimate than those that link us to antiquity. Even our recovery of the judgmental, ethical aspect of Dante, our anathemas against any Romantic falling prey to (heaven forbid) over-sympathy with Francesca, Farinata, or Ulysses, carries sanctimonious overtones only too easily available to us. Indeed, some contemporary Paraphrasts are more ready to bludgeon homiletically, to damn again the already damned, than even Dante himself—the greatest of execrators—is. And when we come to the allegorical efforts of the fourfolders, or to our frequent willingness to integrate even Dante's lateral similes into overbearing structures, we have not ventured that far from our selves. Ours, too, is an age of allegoresis; Walter Benjamin is always there, his riches ready to be ransacked or counterfeited. In sum, however more cunning he is than we are, Dante is certainly much nearer to us than is his guide, his governor, his master (*Inf.* 11, 140), Virgil.

Therefore, the task of the modern translator of Dante is much more synonymic and much less metaphorical in kind than the task of the translator of Virgil. Virgil demands more de-selving of the modern translator—so much more that I was slow to hear all his demands.

For I had begun by seeing Virgil from the Dante vantage

during the six years I spent translating the *Aeneid*, a work which often interrupted my translation of the *Comedy*; I was seeking in the *Aeneid* what Macrobius (in his *Saturnalia* v, i, 19) called a style "now brief, now full, now dry, now rich . . . now easy, now impetuous." That style (those styles) I reached with relative ease by the third draft. Only in the later drafts did I find a music that lay far beyond what I had first been seeking: measures where the violence of silence and the violence of speech are balanced and appeased in a uniquely Virgilian equilibrium (as in the Palinurus passage at the end of Book Five of the *Aeneid*).

That equilibrium involves almost unlimited compassion and patient, unjagged breath—but, also, limited curiosity, tight verbal decorum, the most drastic lexical restraints. In my own work as a poet, the release from Virgil produced *Chelmaxioms* and the forthcoming *Savantasse of Montparnasse.* And as translator, the return to Dante, at least in the *Inferno*, delivered me again to one who is almost wholly given to the violence of speech—even when that violence is directed to talking about the impossibility of talking about the untellable. For Dante is an Aeolus-the-Brusque, a Lord-of-*Furibundus*-Fuss, the Ur-Imam-of-Impetus. Or, for brutish Scrutinists, who reach for similes among the beasts and not among the gods, he is the lizard that, "when it darts from hedge/ to hedge beneath the dog days' giant lash,/ seems, if it cross one's path, a lightning flash" (*Inf.* XXV, 79–81). However seen, he is surely the swiftest and most successive of savants, forever rummaging in his vast and versal haversack of soughs and rasps and gusts and "harsh and scrannel rhymes" (which, in *Inf.* XXXII, 1, he claims he does not have—and then promptly produces). He is seeking those gusts that will most convince us of the credibility of his journey, the accuracy of his record, the trustworthiness of his memory. "Mistaking not" (*Inf.* II, 6), he would offer us evidence as undeniable as that of a historian, Livy, of whom we learn, twenty-six cantos later (*Inf.* XXVIII, 12), that he, too, "does not err."

Finally, he would convince us that *his* are the supreme fictions; and he would do so without contradicting his own claims to truth, because *fictio* for Dante does not mean "pure invention" or "fantastic creation" but—as Gioacchino Papa-

relli has shown—a poetic composition, constructed with the concourse of rhetoric and music, or—we should say—prosody. And in the construction of such fictions, he is not only a strenuous emulator and intrepid pirate, but a competitor and self-announced victor (*Inf.* XXV, 94–102):

Taccia Lucano omai là dov' e' tocca
del misero Sabello e di Nasidio,
e attenda a udir quel ch'or si scocca.
Taccia di Cadmo e d'Aretusa Ovidio,
ché se quello in serpente e quella in fonte
converte poetando, io non lo 'nvidio;
ché due nature mai a fronte a fronte
non transmutò sì ch'amendue le forme
a cambiar lor matera fosser pronte.

Let Lucan now be silent, where he sings
of sad Sabellus and Nasidius,
and wait to hear what flies off from my bow.
Let Ovid now be silent, where he tells
of Cadmus, Arethusa; if his verse
has made of one a serpent, one a fountain,
I do not envy him; he never did
transmute two natures, face to face, so that
both forms were ready to exchange their matter.

That announcement of victory over Ovid and Lucan, who had so collegially welcomed Dante to Limbo, is strategically abetted by Virgil's own incitement of Dante in the canto just before, when Dante had sought brief respite from his breathless impetus, a sedentary truce for his *triste chair*. And Virgil's prodding links the journey of the voyager to the journey of the telling of the tale, in *Inf.* XXIV, 47–51:

. . . . . seggendo in piuma,
in fama non si vien, né sotto coltre;
sanza la qual chi sua vita consuma,
cotal vestigio in terra di sé lascia,
qual fummo in aere e in acqua la schiuma.

. . . . . for he who rests on down
or under covers cannot come to fame;

and he who spends his life without renown
leaves such a vestige of himself on earth
as smoke bequeaths to air or foam to water.

However, that self-announcement rings its unique changes at the very beginning of the second canto of the *Inferno*: "The day was now departing; the dark air/ released the living beings of the earth/ from work and weariness, and I myself/ alone prepared to undergo the battle/ both of the journeying and of the pity/ that memory, mistaking not, shall show./ O Muses, o high genius, help me now . . ." (*Inf.* II, 1–7). The canto in which Dante protests, "I am not Aeneas, am not Paul," is the same canto in which he also says "*io sol uno*," "I myself alone," the first triple repetition of an "I" that we have in Western writing. That triplet is even more steeped in the certainty of fame than are the proclamations of either Sulmona's son, Ovidius-the-Garrulous, Amir-of-Metamorphosists and Sad-Seigneur-of-Scrutinists, at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, or Lucan in Book Nine of the *Pharsalia* (ll. 980–986), the same book in which some two hundred lines earlier, Lucan had sung of Sabellus and Nasidius. And if Dante proclaims his own victory over Lucan in Canto XXV, much later he will also appropriate the epithet "sacred" from Lucan's description of the poet's labor, twice calling his own poem a "sacred poem" in the *Paradiso* (a designation that may also echo Macrobius's term for the *Aeneid*), just as twice he calls his work a "comedy" in the *Inferno*.

Dante's "aloneness" casts a shadow, I believe, on attempts to read him as an Everyman, an exemplary pilgrim. If the first line of the *Inferno* carries with it what Leo Spitzer called the "possessive of human solidarity" in "*our* life's way," that is much more than counterbalanced by the resonances of "*io sol uno*" throughout the *Comedy*.

But the two most arduous emulations of the *Comedy* involve not Lucan or Ovid (though any Aeolus is perforce a closet Ovidian) but Virgil and Aquinas.

The first, Virgil, is involved in the most complex relation the *Comedy* presents. Dante is always with Virgil from the time he finds him "faint because of the long silence" (that

strange amalgam of vision and sound, compounded by the "speechless" sun of *Inf.* I, 60) and hears him move from that silence into frequent, if not garrulous, speech, to the end of the *Inferno* and through much of the *Purgatorio*, until Virgil crowns and miters Dante over his own self (*Purg.* XXVII, 142). This finding of Virgil and this crowning of Dante are best seen against earlier way-stations in the natural history of literary affiliations.

Plato creates his relation to Socrates by annulling his own explicit voice and becoming the secret sharer and ambiguous transformer of one who had not written, devising or appropriating and developing a genre, dialogue, which has proved to be more inimitable than either tragedy or epic. Even one partial aspect of Platonic dialogue, the circumbendibus of its narrative framework—I am thinking especially of the beginning of the *Symposium*, where memory shuttles so uncertainly yet hauntingly—is so intricate, that we wait millenia before we find its match. But Dante, however much he knew of Platonism and neo-Platonism, knew no dialogue of Plato except—possibly—the Latin translation of the *Timaeus*.

Lucretius, with Dante, is the most moving exemplar of affiliation—although he was affiliated with a philosopher, Epicurus, not a poet:

> *Against the darkness you raised such bright light*
> *and first made clear the uses of this life;*
> *glory of the Greeks, I follow you*
> *and set my footsteps now on your sure way,*
> *and not as a contender but a lover*
> *who longs to imitate: how could a swallow*
> *sing against the swan, or could a young*
> *goat with trembling limbs outrun the strong*
> *stallion? You are my father, finder*
> *of things as they are, and give to us a father's*
> *teachings: in your pages, Epicurus,*
> *as bees in flowering fields sip every plant,*
> *we graze on every golden saying, gold*
> *and always worthy of unending life.*

(Lucretius also shares one ancient/modern problem with

Dante: the passage from the more conceptually supple Greek to Latin is not wholly unlike Dante's vying, in the vulgar, modern tongue, with Latin.) But, despite *Par.* XIV, 112–117, Dante surely shares the general medieval ignorance of all except snatches of Lucretius.

Virgil himself is often involved in tacit dialogue with Homer in the *Aeneid*. But it is tacit; and Dante, with Homer mute for him, could hardly have heard it.

Statius, at the end of the *Thebaid*, calls the *Aeneid* "divine" (an epithet that finally joins *Comedy* in the title of Dante's work in 1555), praying for his *Thebaid* to accompany—without rivaling—the *Aeneid*. That Virgil-Statius affiliation will be recuperated by Dante in the *Purgatorio*.

And, of course, we have the affiliation between two books and two sets of authors or One Author in two guises—and with many scribes—implicit, for some, in the Old and New Testaments.

However passionate these previous affiliations may have been, Dante is the first to welcome directly not only himself but his "author," "lord," "governor," "master," "father," into an epic. (Where Curtius and Auerbach reject that term, "epic," for the *Comedy*, both Hegel and Lukács accept it. For me, Dante's radical newness, one which does require the Biblical warrant of the first-person prophet, does not destroy but complements the epic intent. The journey to the underworld of Book VI of the *Aeneid* is magnified into a new whole: new wanderings and wars, "the battle/ both of the journeying and of the pity" of *Inf.* II, 4–5. That battle and that journey offer us both the arms and the man—Dante himself—of whom Dante sings.) Virgil's presence is so indispensable that when one meets the first and only time that "father" is used with reference to him in the *Inferno*, in Canto VIII (the appelation will become frequent in the *Purgatorio*), one is tempted to gloss the unglossable lines in that canto (VIII, 97–100), "O my dear guide, who more than seven times/ has given back to me my confidence/ and snatched me from deep danger that had menaced,/ do not desert me when I'm so undone," thus: the "seven times" are the seven cantos

before this eighth. Without Virgil, those seven cantos would not have been written. But perhaps the most paternal moment is Virgil's maternal semblance in *Inf.* XXIII, 37–42:

Lo duca mio di sùbito mi prese,
come la madre ch'al romore è desta
e vede presso a sé le fiamme accese,
che prende il figlio e fugge e non s'arresta,
avendo più di lui che di sé cura,
tanto che solo una camiscia vesta . . .

My guide snatched me up instantly, just as
the mother who is wakened by a roar
and catches sight of blazing flames beside her,
will lift her son and run without a stop—
she cares more for her child than for herself—
not pausing even to throw on a shift . . .

In prefacing the *Aeneid*, I had noted that critics' "variations on the theme of Homer versus Virgil, using the father to club the son," were "coupled at times with some variations on the theme of Dante versus Virgil, using the son to club the father. Whichever way one turned in the line of affiliation (Homer-Virgil-Dante)—toward parricide or filicide—the middleman Virgil lost." But Dante's own tears at Virgil's departure and his triple invocation of Virgil's name in *Purgatorio* XXX, 49–51, after quoting words of Dido, tell a more provocative, more rich, and ultimately more heartening tale for readers. If one text can engender a second, perhaps the engendering need never end, and no antecedent need be forgotten.

The other text, beside the *Aeneid*, that most provokes Dante is the *Summa Theologica*, the second of Aquinas's summas, begun in the year when Dante was born and left incomplete at Aquinas's death in 1274, nine years later. Dante is not to be called an unequivocal Thomist, but Thomas's is the other epic (here used more loosely) achievement of Dante's centuries. Where Bonaventura had seen the inventions of the poets as fragile, Aquinas saw poetry as *infima doctrina*, a lesser mode of teaching (and more vulgar—and some unvulgar—theologians saw only lies). But he could call it lesser, too, be-

cause his own second *Summa* had evolved a style which Thomas Gilby limned so accurately:

> *Nevertheless St Thomas's style remains an instrument of precision once we appreciate that he was not writing a mathematical treatise or a legal document where single terms can be treated as atoms of discourse or forced into their fixed univocal sense: misapprehensions on this point brought him into false credit and discredit. He was renewing Aristotle's achievement of a synthesis beyond the static world of Parmenides and the fluid world of Heraclitus without, like Plato, finding meaning by forsaking the material world about us; he was addressing himself as a philosopher to the things first shown us through the senses and not to disembodied essences, and as a theologian to the works of God in history from which he suffered even less temptation to escape. He had to render things that were at once dark and shimmering, deep and on the surface, single and complex, firm and supple, irreducibly individual yet sharing in the common whole; and he paid them the compliment of attempting to do so without breaking into poetry.*

And even a Dante smitten with, transformed by, Beatrice, or intent on loving, affiliated inquiry with Virgil, is hard pressed to surpass the anatomy of eros in Aquinas, of which the following miscellany assembled by Gilby can offer us some indication:

> *Love is more unitive than knowledge in seeking the thing, not the thing's reason; its bent is to a real union, though this can be constituted only by knowledge. Other effects of love are enumerated: a reciprocal abiding,* mutua inhaesio, *of lover and beloved together; a transport,* extasis, *out of the self to the other; an ardent cherishing,* zelus, *of another; a melting,* liquefactio, *so that the heart is unfrozen and open to be entered; a longing in absence,* languor, *heat in pursuit,* fervor, *and enjoyment in presence,* fruitio. *In delight, too, there is an all at once wholeness and timelessness that reflects the* tota simul *of eternity; an edge of sadness similar to that of the Gift of Knowledge; an expansion of spirit; a complete fulfilment of activity without satiety,* for they that drink shall yet thirst.

To vie with Aquinas, to lift poetry from its *infima* status,

Dante needs every adroit gavotte of Wholes and Parts and capriole of Part and Wholes.

He needs seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, to the point where he might well have personified Visus, Auditus, Tactus, and Odoratus. (Taste or Gustus is seldom called upon—but when summoned, it is for unforgettable purposes: the "bread of the angels" in *Par.* II, 11 and the salt taste of "others' bread," the bread we beg for in exile, in *Par.* XVII, 59). The verbs of seeing appear so often that even the most patient Scrutinist might falter in his tallies, but one—with his abacus—has told us that there are sixty-seven pairs of eyes in the *Inferno* alone, ninety-seven in the *Purgatorio*, and ninety-four in the *Paradiso*. Where others' baffled lenses may falter, Dante's never do: gazing, peering, squinting, scowling. If he has Virgil summon the "optic nerve" (*Inf.* IX, 73), we can be sure that, had his physiological manuals been more complete, he would have called on the intrepid foveae and fervid canaliculi, the everglaring glands of Moll as well as the zonules of Zinn.

He needs every tangibility he can summon from the world of the shades—but summon *personally*, crossing into that world, witnessing. He needs to begin his journey from a state *as like* to death as one can get while still alive. He needs to read his Hegel well (just as Hegel must read him) to understand that not only the Christian but the Hegelian—or the Heideggerian—poet can gather ultimate energy from only one sure fount: the fear—the absolute fear—of death, a wood "so bitter—death is hardly more severe" (*Inf.* I, 7). And to that end, it matters little whether what is feared is divine judgment or causeless nothingness, Madame Oubli and her company of Slabby-Mists, of *Nebel*, *Nichts*, *Néant*, and Dun-and-Dirty-Erebus, Unwashed-Subfusc, or more simply, just Victor Hugo's "old usherette" with her "black spectacle." Hegel's formulation of that fear couples it, of course, with service and obedience (functions Dante fulfills most immediately in relation to Virgil and Beatrice—and, ultimately, to his God):

> *Without the discipline of service and obedience, fear remains formal and does not spread over the whole known reality of*

existence. Without the formative activity shaping the thing, fear remains inward and mute, and consciousness does not become objective for itself. Should consciousness shape and form the thing without the initial state of absolute fear, then it has a merely vain and futile "mind of its own." . . . *If it has endured not absolute fear, but merely some slight anxiety, negative reality has remained external to it, its substance has not been through and through infected thereby. Since the entire content of its natural consciousness has not tottered and shaken, it is still inherently a determinate mode of being; having a "mind of its own" is simply stubbornness, a type of freedom which does not get beyond the attitude of bondage. As little as the pure form can become its essential nature, so little is that form, considered as extending over particulars, a universal formative activity, an absolute notion; it is rather a piece of cleverness which has mastery within a certain range, but not over the universal power nor over the entire objective reality.*

For "the entire objective reality" read the Great-Gestalt-of-All-Gestalten. And if life and the living are but A-Part, then he who would sing The-All must visit The-Rest. (That Rest is, as descent to the underworld, an epic constituent of both the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, but without the urgent fiction-prophecy of personal witness borne by the poet. Also, in Homer, more than in Virgil, it does not carry Orphic but demystifying Enlightenment elements—elements that are also present in Dante. Rescanning the way-stations of affiliation, but in some disorder, we can see that, while the Old Testament leaves its Sheol wholly lateral, an indistinct, great grey hole that *may* lie near the Musée de l'Homme, or even in unimportant, suburban precincts, the New Testament places that Rest very close to its center. As for the death of Socrates, it surely is essential to the resonance of Plato's work; but I should agree with Lukács that Plato's rejection of tragedy as the proper genre for the life of Socrates carries with it a sense of Socrates' death as an *accidental*, unessential interruption of his substance, which is speech, speech, speech —in effect, dialogue as a polemical rejection of the death-centeredness of the tragedians.)

He needs an adroit *ars poetica*, so that even when he works in plain style, he can mobilize extraordinary combinatorial precisions. Witness Canto XXXIII, 67–75:

Poscia che fummo al quarto dì venuti,
Gaddo mi si gittò disteso a' piedi,
dicendo: 'Padre mio, ché non m'aiuti?'
Quivi morì; e come tu mi vedi,
vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
tra 'l quinto dì e 'l sesto; ond' io me diedi,
già cieco, a brancolar sovra ciascuno,
e due dì li chiamai, poi che fur morti.
Poscia, più che 'l dolor, poté 'l digiuno."

But after we had reached the fourth day, Gaddo,
throwing himself, outstretched, down at my feet,
implored me: 'Father, why do you not help me?'
And there he died; and just as you see me,
I saw the other three fall one by one
between the fifth day and the sixth; at which,
now blind, I started groping over each;
and after they were dead, I called them for
two days; then fasting had more force than grief."

Salvatore Quasimodo, in one of the two essays I chose to complement his poems in the 1960 volume of his *Selected Writings* that I translated into English, in dealing with the first eight lines of this passage, refers to Dante as "the greatest master" of the simple style. But neither he nor I had noted then that, in this passage, which has so little adornment, the sequence of ordinal and cardinal numbers obeys an all-enclosing law—no element escapes. We start with four, move to three, one, five, six, and end with the one number needed to complete the set: two. (Proof enough, if any were needed, that one textual variant which would have had "three days" instead of "two days" was incorrect.) It is as if even accidental elements combine to become a vise that locks Ugolino into the ineluctable. Of course, the last line in the Italian, one which Quasimodo omitted when he quoted the passage, is the most obviously patterned of the nine, with the anaphoric closure of "*poscia*" and very strong internal alliterative links.

Or witness the extraordinary intuition-in-labor of Dante's tercet rhymes. For ABA exists not only on the level of interword relations but on two other levels: 1) The hendecasyl-

lable line itself is often accented on its sixth and central syllable. And even when that syllable is unaccented, it may serve as a kind of center for accents on the fourth and eighth syllables, symmetrically placed to its right and left. When we couple this frequent function of the sixth syllable with what is the most frequent Italian line-end (and, of course, the most frequent stress placement in Italian words), the *piano* or feminine ending, then—following Giuseppe Sansone's patient elaborations—we can see that the hendecasyllable often has what I should call an internal balancing needle. Around that needle, when the obligatory stress on the tenth syllable is complemented by an initial iamb and consequent stress on the second syllable, we can generate not only homeopodic (or superimposed) symmetry but antipodic (mirror) symmetry —reinforcing ABA on the level of the line. 2) To this I should now add a reinforcement of ABA in terms of the constituents of the *single* rhyme word, a reinforcement that may seem as astonishing as the metamorphoses of Canto XXV. For the most frequent word termini in Italian are vowel-consonant-vowel termini; and that VCV echoes, on still another level, the ABA of the first two levels. English, with its even-numbered metrical positions in each line (even Milton, the most sensitive to Italian of our major poets, has little taste for feminine endings in his major work) and its paucity of vowel-consonant-vowel termini can never mime the depth of that prosodic intuition. That is *not* the reason for my forgoing tercet rhyme in this translation (which was simply dependent on my need to reach as clean and precise a rendering as possible); but it is the reason for the close phonic packing, whether in stressed or unstressed positions, which I have sought throughout this translation—with pure rhymes, pararhyme, assonances, alliterations, and consonances often called into service.(One pause is needed here: The possibility of Dante's conscious awareness of this level, the vowel, consonant, vowel trinity of the single rhyme, reinforcing the other levels, does find warrant in this: the vast majority of *piano* rhyme termini have, as we noted above, three phonemes; but two of the three phonemes are outside the stress situation. In VCV, it is the first element only that is stressed. This should lead, ideally, to heightened awareness of the poetic weight of *all* elements, tonic or not. And the ideal terminus for that ideal awareness would be the lexical independence of those

two non-tonic elements, the terminal consonant and vowel. Our ideal fable finds its incarnation when Dante, in the middle of the *Purgatorio*, enjambs on the definite article, "*la*," the first of his three such enjambments on definite articles. English will wait almost half-a-millenium for Blake to enjamb on "the"—and longer for Wallace Stevens' final "the the" in "The Man on the Dump.")

Or track Aldo Scaglione's analysis of *Inf.* III, 25–30, using the translation to heighten the detailed sense of what can and cannot be taken across a linguistic border:

Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,
parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle
facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
sempre in quell' aura sanza tempo tinta,
come la rena quando turbo spira.

Strange utterances, horrible pronouncements,
accents of anger, words of suffering,
and voices shrill and faint, and beating hands—
all went to make a tumult that will whirl
forever through that turbid, timeless air,
like sand that eddies when a whirlwind swirls.

Here my English has tried to embody as much as I could of what Scaglione saw in the Italian, with the crescendo from noun and epithet in the first line, to noun and complement in the second, to noun and two epithets in the third line. Then I had to forgo the noun and two complements in that same line (with my "beating hands" for "*suon di man con elle*") but did recoup the enjambment at the end of the fourth line and the force of sudden closure in the sixth.

The sum of Dante's needs encompasses a progression of three "words," a progression detailed in a fable that rises far from the Arno or the Tiber. (But in a climate as syncretistic as Dante's, where antiquity is appropriated by Christianity in a mode perhaps less arbitrary but no less omnivorous than the way in which a Cross surmounts an Egyptian obelisk mounted, in turn, on Bernini's elephant in the piazza of Santa Maria

sopra Minerva, my calling on a Dogon fable as coda is hardly inappropriate.) According to Jean Laude, the myths of the Dogon would have us see this: "Three 'words' were revealed to humans. Each 'word' marks a stage in the order of technical invention and shows the passage from a conception of point-ed space (the point is likened to a seed) to linear space (the line is like the thread used in weaving) and, finally, to three-dimensional space (volume is likened to the hand-drum borne under the arm)." Some Scrutinists would simplify the Dogon fable, reading: Point is to Line is to Volume, as Seed is to Thread is to Drum. Dante embraces the complete progression, but it is clear that he hastens always in the direction of Volume, toward the violence of speech, away from the violence of silence. In brief, Dante is a Drummer. And this translation asks to be read aloud.

Sages, Elders, Emenders, Perpenders, Paraphrasts, Querists, Amphibolists, Nebulists, Quandarists, Rhetors, Wreckers, Embalmers, Bores, and Picadors—so many Exegetes, living and dead, from Dante's time to our own have contributed, at some point, to the understandings and misunderstandings that, over some two decades, have made this translation possible. That record of specific indebtedness will be made clear in the three companion volumes of commentary, the California Lectura Dantis, that will accompany the three *cantiche*. But in this volume of text and translation and illustration, I cannot delay voicing my gratitude: to Thomas Bergin, who had been pressed into service as Chairman of the English Department at Cornell University and, during my first year of teaching, some thirty-three years ago, benevolently shepherded a twenty-year-old through the pedagogic palestra and served as emblem for the joys that lay in the reading of Dante; to the Society of Fellows of Harvard, for my years there, 1951–1954, when Charles Singleton was still in Cambridge and Renato Poggioli was still alive; to two who paced at the Gate of Text, Giuseppe Vandelli, whose 1921 Società Dantesca critical text of the *Commedia* and later emendations through the posthumous, tenth edition of his "redoing" of Scartazzini's commentary formed the base for this translation in its earlier stages, and Giorgio Petrocchi, whose textual work anchored the later stages (the fullness of Petrocchi's apparatus and the lucidity of his decision procedures, even

when one would disagree with him, are among the unequivocal gifts philology has given to the poetry of the present past); to The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where Gian-Roberto Sarolli and Ezio Raimondi have been enthusiastic co-inquirers, Aldo Scaglione has been a precious visitor, and my students have been as able and acute as anyone who professes can merit; to dear colleagues who made my visits to Washington University in Saint Louis, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Honors Program at the University of Houston, and the University of Denver so fruitful; to Edward Cranz, whose modes of reading and detailed perception of the divide between ancients and moderns have been so uncannily close to the grit of the practical lexical problems and decisions I have encountered in translating Dante and Virgil; and to Barry Moser, for the set of plates that appear here—his arabesque of *Mens* and Lens at one with Hand and Text that, like Hell itself, is drawn to last.

Allen Mandelbaum

The Graduate Center
of the City University of New York
September, 1979

INFERNO



INFERNO

CANTO I

When I had journeyed half of our life's way,
I found myself within a shadowed forest,
for I had lost the path that does not stray.
Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was,
that savage forest, dense and difficult,
which even in recall renews my fear:
so bitter—death is hardly more severe!
But to retell the good discovered there,
I'll also tell the other things I saw.
I cannot clearly say how I had entered
the wood; I was so full of sleep just at
the point where I abandoned the true path.
But when I'd reached the bottom of a hill—
it rose along the boundary of the valley
that had harassed my heart with so much fear—
I looked on high and saw its shoulders clothed
already by the rays of that same planet
which serves to lead men straight along all roads.
At this my fear was somewhat quieted;
for through the night of sorrow I had spent,
the lake within my heart felt terror present.
And just as he who, with exhausted breath,
having escaped from sea to shore, turns back
to watch the dangerous waters he has quit,
so did my spirit, still a fugitive,
turn back to look intently at the pass
that never has let any man survive.
I let my tired body rest awhile.
Moving again, I tried the lonely slope—
my firm foot always was the one below.
And almost where the hillside starts to rise—
look there!—a leopard, very quick and lithe,
a leopard covered with a spotted hide.

The voyager-narrator astray by night in a dark forest. Morning and the sunlit hill. Three beasts that impede his ascent. The encounter with Virgil, who offers his guidance and an alternative path through two of the three realms the voyager must visit.

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
ché la diritta via era smarrita.
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
che nel pensier rinova la paura!
Tant' è amara che poco è più morte;
ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai,
dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' v'ho scorte.
Io non so ben ridir com' i' v'intrai,
tant' era pien di sonno a quel punto
che la verace via abbandonai.
Ma poi ch'i' fui al piè d'un colle giunto,
là dove terminava quella valle
che m'avea di paura il cor compunto,
guardai in alto e vidi le sue spalle
vestite già de' raggi del pianeta
che mena dritto altrui per ogne calle.
Allor fu la paura un poco queta,
che nel lago del cor m'era durata
la notte ch'i' passai con tanta pieta.
E come quei che con lena affannata,
uscito fuor del pelago a la riva,
si volge a l'acqua perigliosa e guata,
così l'animo mio, ch'ancor fuggiva,
si volse a retro a rimirar lo passo
che non lasciò già mai persona viva.
Poi ch'èi posato un poco il corpo lasso,
ripresi via per la piaggia diserta,
sì che 'l piè fermo sempre era 'l più basso.
Ed ecco, quasi al cominciar de l'erta,
una lonza leggiera e presta molto,
che di pel macolato era coverta;

He did not disappear from sight, but stayed;
indeed, he so impeded my ascent
that I had often to turn back again.
The time was the beginning of the morning;
the sun was rising now in fellowship
with the same stars that had escorted it
when Divine Love first moved those things of beauty;
so that the hour and the gentle season
gave me good cause for hopefulness on seeing
that beast before me with his speckled skin;
but hope was hardly able to prevent
the fear I felt when I beheld a lion.
His head held high and ravenous with hunger—
even the air around him seemed to shudder—
this lion seemed to make his way against me.
And then a she-wolf showed herself; she seemed
to carry every craving in her leanness;
she had already brought despair to many.
The very sight of her so weighted me
with fearfulness that I abandoned hope
of ever climbing up that mountain slope.
Even as he who glories while he gains
will, when the time has come to tally loss,
lament with every thought and turn despondent,
so was I when I faced that restless beast,
which, even as she stalked me, step by step
had thrust me back to where the sun is speechless.
While I retreated down to lower ground,
before my eyes there suddenly appeared
one who seemed faint because of the long silence.
When I saw him in that vast wilderness,
"Have pity on me," were the words I cried,
"whatever you may be—a shade, a man."
He answered me: "Not man; I once was man.
Both of my parents came from Lombardy,
and both claimed Mantua as native city.
And I was born, though late, *sub Julio*,
and lived in Rome under the good Augustus—
the season of the false and lying gods.
I was a poet, and I sang the righteous
son of Anchises who had come from Troy
when flames destroyed the pride of Ilium.

e non mi si partia dinanzi al volto,
anzi 'mpediva tanto il mio cammino,
ch'i' fui per ritornar più volte vòlto.
Temp' era dal principio del mattino,
e 'l sol montava 'n sù con quelle stelle
ch'eran con lui quando l'amor divino
mosse di prima quelle cose belle;
sì ch'a bene sperar m'era cagione
di quella fiera a la gaetta pelle
l'ora del tempo e la dolce stagione;
ma non sì che paura non mi desse
la vista che m'apparve d'un leone.
Questi parea che contra me venisse
con la test' alta e con rabbiosa fame,
sì che parea che l'aere ne tremesse.
Ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca ne la sua magrezza,
e molte genti fé già viver grame,
questa mi porse tanto di gravezza
con la paura ch'uscia di sua vista,
ch'io perdei la speranza de l'altezza.
E qual è quei che volontieri acquista,
e giugne 'l tempo che perder lo face,
che 'n tutti suoi pensier piange e s'attrista;
tal mi fece la bestia sanza pace,
che, venendomi 'ncontro, a poco a poco
mi ripigneva là dove 'l sol tace.
Mentre ch'i' rovinava in basso loco,
dinanzi a li occhi mi si fu offerto
chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco.
Quando vidi costui nel gran diserto,
"*Miserere* di me," gridai a lui,
"qual che tu sii, od ombra od omo certo!"
Rispuosemi: "Non omo, omo già fui,
e li parenti miei furon lombardi,
mantoani per patrïa ambedui.
Nacqui *sub Iulio*, ancor che fosse tardi,
e vissi a Roma sotto 'l buono Augusto
nel tempo de li dèi falsi e bugiardi.
Poeta fui, e cantai di quel giusto
figliuol d'Anchise che venne di Troia,
poi che 'l superbo Ilïón fu combusto.

But why do you return to wretchedness?
Why not climb up the mountain of delight,
the origin and cause of every joy?"
"And are you then that Virgil, you the fountain
that freely pours so rich a stream of speech?"
I answered him with shame upon my brow.
"O light and honor of all other poets,
may my long study and the intense love
that made me search your volume serve me now.
You are my master and my author, you—
the only one from whom my writing drew
the noble style for which I have been honored.
You see the beast that made me turn aside;
help me, o famous sage, to stand against her,
for she has made my blood and pulses shudder."
"It is another path that you must take,"
he answered when he saw my tearfulness,
"if you would leave this savage wilderness;
the beast that is the cause of your outcry
allows no man to pass along her track,
but blocks him even to the point of death;
her nature is so squalid, so malicious
that she can never sate her greedy will;
when she has fed, she's hungrier than ever.
She mates with many living souls and shall
yet mate with many more, until the Greyhound
arrives, inflicting painful death on her.
That Hound will never feed on land or pewter,
but find his fare in wisdom, love, and virtue;
his place of birth shall be between two felts.
He will restore low-lying Italy
for which the maid Camilla died of wounds,
and Nisus, Turnus, and Euryalus.
And he will hunt that beast through every city
until he thrusts her back again to Hell,
from which she was first sent above by envy.
Therefore, I think and judge it best for you
to follow me, and I shall guide you, taking
you from this place through an eternal place,
where you shall hear the howls of desperation
and see the ancient spirits in their pain,
as each of them laments his second death;

Ma tu perché ritorni a tanta noia?
perché non sali il dilettoso monte
ch'è principio e cagion di tutta gioia?"
"Or se' tu quel Virgilio e quella fonte
che spandi di parlar sì largo fiume?"
rispuos' io lui con vergognosa fronte.
"O de li altri poeti onore e lume,
vagliami 'l lungo studio e 'l grande amore
che m'ha fatto cercar lo tuo volume.
Tu se' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore,
tu se' solo colui da cu' io tolsi
lo bello stilo che m'ha fatto onore.
Vedi la bestia per cu' io mi volsi;
aiutami da lei, famoso saggio,
ch'ella mi fa tremar le vene e i polsi."
"A te convien tenere altro vïaggio,"
rispuose, poi che lagrimar mi vide,
"se vuo' campar d'esto loco selvaggio;
ché questa bestia, per la qual tu gride,
non lascia altrui passar per la sua via,
ma tanto lo 'mpedisce che l'uccide;
e ha natura sì malvagia e ria,
che mai non empie la bramosa voglia,
e dopo 'l pasto ha più fame che pria.
Molti son li animali a cui s'ammoglia,
e più saranno ancora, infin che 'l veltro
verrà, che la farà morir con doglia.
Questi non ciberà terra né peltro,
ma sapïenza, amore e virtute,
e sua nazion sarà tra feltro e feltro.
Di quella umile Italia fia salute
per cui morì la vergine Cammilla,
Eurialo e Turno e Niso di ferute.
Questi la caccerà per ogne villa,
fin che l'avrà rimessa ne lo 'nferno,
là onde 'nvidia prima dipartilla.
Ond' io per lo tuo me' penso e discerno
che tu mi segui, e io sarò tua guida,
e trarrotti di qui per loco etterno,
ove udirai le disperate strida,
vedrai li antichi spiriti dolenti,
ch'a la seconda morte ciascun grida;

and you shall see those souls who are content
within the fire, for they hope to reach—
whenever that may be—the blessed people.
If you would then ascend as high as these,
a soul more worthy than I am will guide you;
I'll leave you in her care when I depart,
because that Emperor who reigns above,
since I have been rebellious to His law,
will not allow me entry to His city.
He governs everywhere, but rules from there;
there is His city, His high capital:
o happy those He chooses to be there!"
And I replied: "O poet—by that God
whom you had never come to know—I beg you,
that I may flee this evil and worse evils,
to lead me to the place of which you spoke,
that I may see the gateway of Saint Peter
and those whom you describe as sorrowful."
Then he set out, and I moved on behind him.

e vederai color che son contenti
nel foco, perché speran di venire
quando che sia a le beate genti.
A le quai poi se tu vorrai salire,
anima fia a ciò più di me degna:
con lei ti lascerò nel mio partire;
ché quello imperador che là sù regna,
perch' i' fu' ribellante a la sua legge,
non vuol che 'n sua città per me si vegna.
In tutte parti impera e quivi regge;
quivi è la sua città e l'alto seggio:
oh felice colui cu' ivi elegge!"
E io a lui: "Poeta, io ti richeggio
per quello Dio che tu non conoscesti,
a ciò ch'io fugga questo male e peggio,
che tu mi meni là dov' or dicesti,
sì ch'io veggia la porta di san Pietro
e color cui tu fai cotanto mesti."
Allor si mosse, e io li tenni dietro.



1·2



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II · 127

CANTO II

The day was now departing; the dark air
released the living beings of the earth
from work and weariness; and I myself
  alone prepared to undergo the battle
both of the journeying and of the pity,
which memory, mistaking not, shall show.
  O Muses, o high genius, help me now;
o memory that set down what I saw,
here shall your excellence reveal itself!
  I started: "Poet, you who are my guide,
see if the force in me is strong enough
before you let me face that rugged pass.
  You say that he who fathered Sylvius,
while he was still corruptible, had journeyed
into the deathless world with his live body.
  For, if the Enemy of every evil
was courteous to him, considering
all he would cause and who and what he was,
  that does not seem incomprehensible,
since in the empyrean heaven he was chosen
to father honored Rome and her empire;
  and if the truth be told, Rome and her realm
were destined to become the sacred place,
the seat of the successor of great Peter.
  And through the journey you ascribe to him,
he came to learn of things that were to bring
his victory and, too, the papal mantle.
  Later the Chosen Vessel travelled there,
to bring us back assurance of that faith
with which the way to our salvation starts.
  But why should I go there? Who sanctions it?
For I am not Aeneas, am not Paul;
nor I nor others think myself so worthy.

The following evening. Invocation to the Muses. The narrator's questioning of his worthiness to visit the deathless world. Virgil's comforting explanation that he has been sent to help Dante by three Ladies of Heaven. The voyager heartened. Their setting out.

Lo giorno se n'andava, e l'aere bruno
toglieva li animai che sono in terra
da le fatiche loro; e io sol uno
m'apparecchiava a sostener la guerra
sì del cammino e sì de la pietate,
che ritrarrà la mente che non erra.
O Muse, o alto ingegno, or m'aiutate;
o mente che scrivesti ciò ch'io vidi,
qui si parrà la tua nobilitate.
Io cominciai: "Poeta che mi guidi,
guarda la mia virtù s'ell' è possente,
prima ch'a l'alto passo tu mi fidi.
Tu dici che di Silvïo il parente,
corruttibile ancora, ad immortale
secolo andò, e fu sensibilmente.
Però, se l'avversario d'ogne male
cortese i fu, pensando l'alto effetto
ch'uscir dovea di lui, e 'l chi e 'l quale,
non pare indegno ad omo d'intelletto;
ch'e' fu de l'alma Roma e di suo impero
ne l'empireo ciel per padre eletto:
la quale e 'l quale, a voler dir lo vero,
fu stabilita per lo loco santo
u' siede il successor del maggior Piero.
Per quest' andata onde li dai tu vanto,
intese cose che furon cagione
di sua vittoria e del papale ammanto.
Andovvi poi lo Vas d'elezïone,
per recarne conforto a quella fede
ch'è principio a la via di salvazione.
Ma io, perché venirvi? o chi 'l concede?
Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono;
me degno a ciò né io né altri 'l crede.

Therefore, if I consent to start this journey,
I fear my venture may be wild and empty.
You're wise; you know far more than what I say."
And just as he who unwills what he wills
and shifts what he intends to seek new ends
so that he's drawn from what he had begun,
so was I in the midst of that dark land,
because, with all my thinking, I annulled
the task I had so quickly undertaken.
"If I have understood what you have said,"
replied the shade of that great-hearted one,
"your soul has been assailed by cowardice,
which often weighs so heavily on a man—
distracting him from honorable trials—
as phantoms frighten beasts when shadows fall.
That you may be delivered from this fear,
I'll tell you why I came and what I heard
when I first felt compassion for your pain.
I was among those souls who are suspended;
a lady called to me, so blessed, so lovely
that I implored to serve at her command.
Her eyes surpassed the splendor of the star's;
and she began to speak to me—so gently
and softly—with angelic voice. She said:
'O spirit of the courteous Mantuan,
whose fame is still a presence in the world
and shall endure as long as the world lasts,
my friend, who has not been the friend of fortune,
is hindered in his path along that lonely
hillside; he has been turned aside by terror.
From all that I have heard of him in Heaven,
he is, I fear, already so astray
that I have come to help him much too late.
Go now; with your persuasive word, with all
that is required to see that he escapes,
bring help to him, that I may be consoled.
For I am Beatrice who send you on;
I come from where I most long to return;
Love prompted me, that Love which makes me speak.
When once again I stand before my Lord,
then I shall often let Him hear your praises.'
Now Beatrice was silent. I began:

Per che, se del venire io m'abbandono,
temo che la venuta non sia folle.
Se' savio; intendi me' ch'i' non ragiono."
E qual è quei che disvuol ciò che volle
e per novi pensier cangia proposta,
sì che dal cominciar tutto si tolle,
tal mi fec' ïo 'n quella oscura costa,
perché, pensando, consumai la 'mpresa
che fu nel cominciar cotanto tosta.
"S'i' ho ben la parola tua intesa,"
rispuose del magnanimo quell' ombra,
"l'anima tua è da viltade offesa;
la qual molte fïate l'omo ingombra
sì che d'onrata impresa lo rivolve,
come falso veder bestia quand' ombra.
Da questa tema a ciò che tu ti solve,
dirotti perch' io venni e quel ch'io 'ntesi
nel primo punto che di te mi dolve.
Io era tra color che son sospesi,
e donna mi chiamò beata e bella,
tal che di comandare io la richiesi.
Lucevan li occhi suoi più che la stella;
e cominciommi a dir soave e piana,
con angelica voce, in sua favella:
'O anima cortese mantoana,
di cui la fama ancor nel mondo dura,
e durerà quanto 'l mondo lontana,
l'amico mio, e non de la ventura,
ne la diserta piaggia è impedito
sì nel cammin, che vòlt' è paura;
e temo che non sia già sì smarrito,
ch'io mi sia tardi al soccorso levata,
per quel ch'i' ho di lui nel cielo udito.
Or movi, e con la tua parola ornata
e con ciò c'ha mestieri al suo campare,
l'aiuta sì ch'i' ne sia consolata.
I' son Beatrice che ti faccio andare;
vegno del loco ove tornar disio;
amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare.
Quando sarò dinanzi al segnor mio,
di te mi loderò sovente a lui.'
Tacette allora, e poi comincia' io:

'O Lady of virtue, the sole reason why
the human race surpasses all that lies
beneath the heaven with the smallest spheres,
so welcome is your wish, that even if
it were already done, it would seem tardy;
all you need do is let me know your will.
But tell me why you have not been more prudent—
descending to this center, moving from
that spacious place where you long to return?'
'Because you want to fathom things so deeply,
I now shall tell you promptly,' she replied,
'why I am not afraid to enter here.
One ought to be afraid of nothing other
than things possessed of power to do us harm,
but things innocuous need not be feared.
God, in His graciousness, has made me so
that this, your misery, cannot touch me;
I can withstand the fires flaming here.
In Heaven there's a gentle lady—one
who weeps for the distress toward which I send you,
so that stern judgment up above is shattered.
And it was she who called upon Lucia,
requesting of her: "Now your faithful one
has need of you, and I commend him to you."
Lucia, enemy of every cruelty,
arose and made her way to where I was,
sitting beside the venerable Rachel.
She said: "You, Beatrice, true praise of God,
why have you not helped him who loves you so
that—for your sake—he's left the vulgar crowd?
Do you not hear the anguish in his cry?
Do you not see the death he wars against
upon that river ruthless as the sea?"
No one within this world has ever been
so quick to seek his good or flee his harm
as I—when she had finished speaking thus—
to come below, down from my blessed station;
I trusted in your honest utterance,
which honors you and those who've listened to you.'
When she had finished with her words to me,
she turned aside her gleaming, tearful eyes,
which only made me hurry all the more.

'O donna di virtù sola per cui
l'umana spezie eccede ogne contento
di quel ciel c'ha minor li cerchi sui,
tanto m'aggrada il tuo comandamento,
che l'ubidir, se già fosse, m'è tardi;
più non t'è uo' ch'aprirmi il tuo talento.
Ma dimmi la cagion che non ti guardi
de lo scender qua giuso in questo centro
de l'ampio loco ove tornar tu ardi.'
'Da che tu vuo' saver cotanto a dentro,
dirotti brievemente,' mi rispuose,
'perch' i' non temo di venir qua entro.
Temer si dee di sole quelle cose
c'hanno potenza di fare altrui male;
de l'altre no, ché non son paurose.
I' son fatta da Dio, sua mercé, tale,
che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
né fiamma d'esto 'ncendio non m'assale.
Donna è gentil nel ciel che si compiange
di questo 'mpedimento ov' io ti mando,
sì che duro giudicio là sù frange.
Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando
e disse:—Or ha bisogno il tuo fedele
di te, e io a te lo raccomando—.
Lucia, nimica di ciascun crudele,
si mosse, e venne al loco dov' i' era,
che mi sedea con l'antica Rachele.
Disse:—Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,
ché non soccorri quei che t'amò tanto,
ch'uscì per te de la volgare schiera?
Non odi tu la pieta del suo pianto,
non vedi tu la morte che 'l combatte
su la fiumana ove 'l mar non ha vanto?—
Al mondo non fur mai persone ratte
a far lor pro o a fuggir lor danno,
com' io, dopo cotai parole fatte,
venni qua giù del mio beato scanno,
fidandomi del tuo parlare onesto,
ch'onora te e quei ch'udito l'hanno.'
Poscia che m'ebbe ragionato questo,
li occhi lucenti lagrimando volse,
per che mi fece del venir più presto.

And, just as she had wished, I came to you:
I snatched you from the path of the fierce beast
that barred the shortest way up the fair mountain.
What is it then? Why, why do you resist?
Why does your heart host so much cowardice?
Where are your daring and your openness
as long as there are three such blessed women
concerned for you within the court of Heaven
and my words promise you so great a good?"
As little flowers, which the chill of night
has bent and huddled, when the white sun strikes,
grow straight and open fully on their stems,
so did I, too, with my exhausted force;
and such warm daring rushed into my heart
that I—as one who has been freed—began:
"O she, compassionate, who has helped me!
And you who, courteous, obeyed so quickly
the true words that she had addressed to you!
You, with your words, have so disposed my heart
to longing for this journey—I return
to what I was at first prepared to do.
Now go; a single will fills both of us:
you are my guide, my governor, my master."
These were my words to him; when he advanced,
I entered on the steep and savage path.

E venni a te così com' ella volse:
d'inanzi a quella fiera ti levai
che del bel monte il corto andar ti tolse.
Dunque: che è? perché, perché restai,
perché tanta viltà nel core allette,
perché ardire e franchezza non hai,
poscia che tai tre donne benedette
curan di te ne la corte del cielo,
e 'l mio parlar tanto ben ti promette?"
Quali fioretti dal notturno gelo
chinati e chiusi, poi che 'l sol li 'mbianca,
si drizzan tutti aperti in loro stelo,
tal mi fec' io di mia virtude stanca,
e tanto buono ardire al cor mi corse,
ch'i' cominciai come persona franca:
"Oh pietosa colei che mi soccorse!
e te cortese ch'ubidisti tosto
a le vere parole che ti porse!
Tu m'hai con disiderio il cor disposto
sì al venir con le parole tue,
ch'i' son tornato nel primo proposto.
Or va, ch'un sol volere è d'ambedue:
tu duca, tu segnore e tu maestro."
Così li dissi; e poi che mosso fue,
intrai per lo cammino alto e silvestro.

CANTO III

THROUGH ME THE WAY INTO THE SUFFERING CITY,
THROUGH ME THE WAY TO THE ETERNAL PAIN,
THROUGH ME THE WAY THAT RUNS AMONG THE LOST.
JUSTICE URGED ON MY HIGH ARTIFICER;
MY MAKER WAS DIVINE AUTHORITY,
THE HIGHEST WISDOM, AND THE PRIMAL LOVE.
BEFORE ME NOTHING BUT ETERNAL THINGS
WERE MADE, AND I ENDURE ETERNALLY.
ABANDON EVERY HOPE, WHO ENTER HERE.

These words—their aspect was obscure—I read
inscribed above a gateway, and I said:
"Master, their meaning is difficult for me."
And he to me, as one who comprehends:
"Here one must leave behind all hesitation;
here every cowardice must meet its death.
For we have reached the place of which I spoke,
where you will see the miserable people,
those who have lost the good of the intellect."
And when, with gladness in his face, he placed
his hand upon my own, to comfort me,
he drew me in among the hidden things.
Here sighs and lamentations and loud cries
were echoing across the starless air,
so that, as soon as I set out, I wept.
Strange utterances, horrible pronouncements,
accents of anger, words of suffering,
and voices shrill and faint, and beating hands—
all went to make a tumult that will whirl
forever through that turbid, timeless air,
like sand that eddies when a whirlwind swirls.
And I—my head oppressed by horror—said:
"Master, what is it that I hear? Who are
those people so defeated by their pain?"

The inscription above the Gate of Hell. The ante-Inferno, where the shades of those who lived without praise and without blame now intermingle with the neutral angels. He who made the great refusal. The River Acheron. Charon. Dante's loss of his senses as the earth trembles.

PER ME SI VA NE LA CITTÀ DOLENTE,
PER ME SI VA NE L ETTERNO DOLORE,
PER ME SI VA TRA LA PERDUTA GENTE.
GIUSTIZIA MOSSE IL MIO ALTO FATTORE;
FECEMI LA DIVINA PODESTATE,
LA SOMMA SAPÏENZA E 'L PRIMO AMORE.
DINANZI A ME NON FUOR COSE CREATE
SE NON ETTERNE, E IO ETTERNO DURO.
LASCIATE OGNE SPERANZA, VOI CH'INTRATE.

Queste parole di colore oscuro
vid' ïo scritte al sommo d'una porta;
per ch'io: "Maestro, il senso lor m'è duro."
Ed elli a me, come persona accorta:
"Qui si convien lasciare ogne sospetto;
ogne viltà convien che qui sia morta.
Noi siam venuti al loco ov' i' t'ho detto
che tu vedrai le genti dolorose
c'hanno perduto il ben de l'intelletto."
E poi che la sua mano a la mia puose
con lieto volto, ond' io mi confortai,
mi mise dentro a le segrete cose.
Quivi sospiri, pianti e alti guai
risonavan per l'aere sanza stelle,
per ch'io al cominciar ne lagrimai.
Diverse lingue, orribili favelle,
parole di dolore, accenti d'ira,
voci alte e fioche, e suon di man con elle
facevano un tumulto, il qual s'aggira
sempre in quell' aura sanza tempo tinta,
come la rena quando turbo spira.
E io ch'avea d'orror la testa cinta,
dissi: "Maestro, che è quel ch'i' odo?
e che gent' è che par nel duol sì vinta?"

And he to me: "This miserable way
is taken by the sorry souls of those
who lived without disgrace and without praise.
They now commingle with the coward angels,
the company of those who were not rebels
nor faithful to their God, but stood apart.
The heavens, that their beauty not be lessened,
have cast them out, nor will deep Hell receive them—
even the wicked cannot glory in them."
And I: "What is it, master, that oppresses
these souls, compelling them to wail so loud?"
He answered: "I shall tell you in few words.
Those who are here can place no hope in death,
and their blind life is so abject that they
are envious of every other fate.
The world will let no fame of theirs endure;
both justice and compassion must disdain them;
let us not talk of them, but look and pass."
And I, looking more closely, saw a banner
that, as it wheeled about, raced on—so quick
that any respite seemed unsuited to it.
Behind that banner trailed so long a file
of people—I should never have believed
that death could have unmade so many souls.
After I had identified a few,
I saw and recognized the shade of him
who made, through cowardice, the great refusal.
At once I understood with certainty:
this company contained the cowardly,
hateful to God and to His enemies.
These wretched ones, who never were alive,
went naked and were stung again, again
by horseflies and by wasps that circled them.
The insects streaked their faces with their blood,
which, mingled with their tears, fell at their feet,
where it was gathered up by sickening worms.
And then, looking beyond them, I could see
a crowd along the bank of a great river;
at which I said: "Allow me now to know
who are these people—master—and what law
has made them seem so eager for the crossing,
as I can see despite the feeble light."

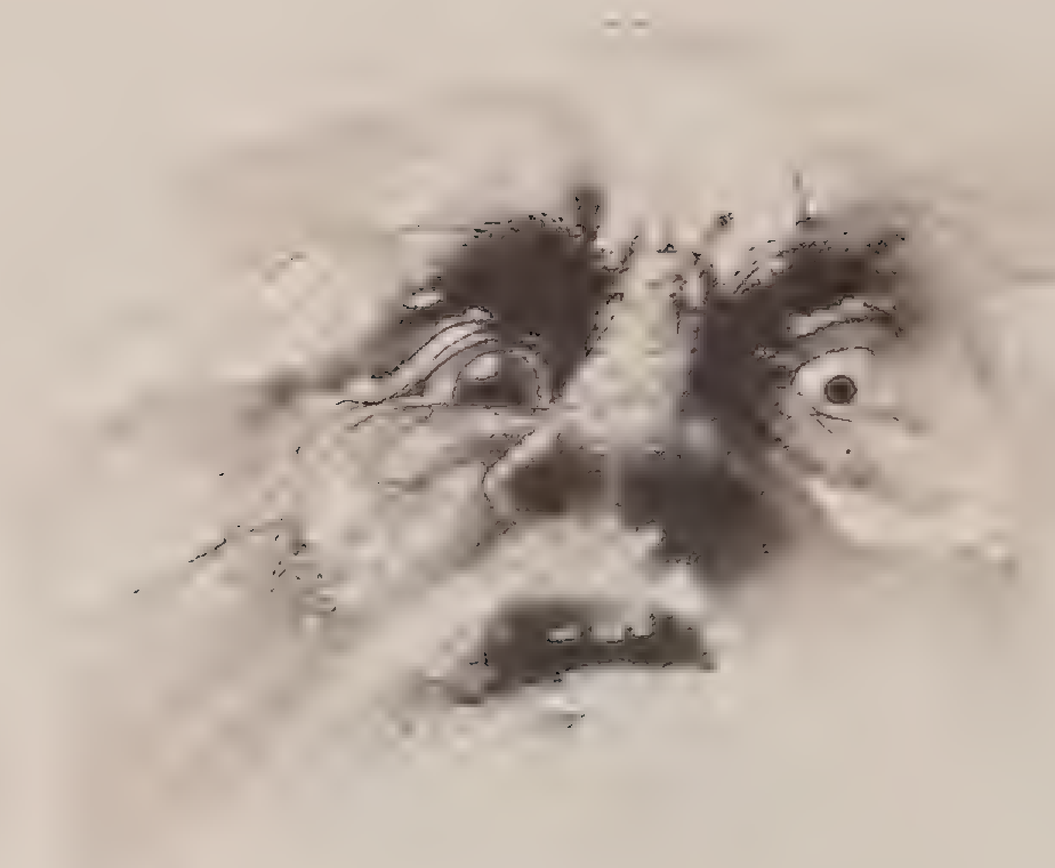
Ed elli a me: "Questo misero modo
tegnon l'anime triste di coloro
che visser sanza 'nfamia e sanza lodo.
Mischiate sono a quel cattivo coro
de li angeli che non furon ribelli
né fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sé fuoro.
Caccianli i ciel per non esser men belli,
né lo profondo inferno li riceve,
ch'alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d'elli."
E io: "Maestro, che è tanto greve
a lor che lamentar li fa sì forte?"
Rispuose: "Dicerolti molto breve.
Questi non hanno speranza di morte,
e la lor cieca vita è tanto bassa,
che 'nvidïosi son d'ogne altra sorte.
Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa;
misericordia e giustizia li sdegna:
non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."
E io, che riguardai, vidi una 'nsegna
che girando correva tanto ratta,
che d'ogne posa mi parea indegna;
e dietro le venìa sì lunga tratta
di gente, ch'i' non averei creduto
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.
Poscia ch'io v'ebbi alcun riconosciuto,
vidi e conobbi l'ombra di colui
che fece per viltade il gran rifiuto.
Incontanente intesi e certo fui
che questa era la setta d'i cattivi,
a Dio spiacenti e a' nemici sui.
Questi sciaurati, che mai non fur vivi,
erano ignudi e stimolati molto
da mosconi e da vespe ch'eran ivi.
Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto,
che, mischiato di lagrime, a' lor piedi
da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto.
E poi ch'a riguardar oltre mi diedi,
vidi genti a la riva d'un gran fiume;
per ch'io dissi: "Maestro, or mi concedi
ch'i' sappia quali sono, e qual costume
le fa di trapassar parer sì pronte,
com' i' discerno per lo fioco lume."

And he to me: "When we have stopped along
the melancholy shore of Acheron,
then all these matters will be plain to you."
At that, with eyes ashamed, downcast, and fearing
that what I said had given him offense,
I did not speak until we reached the river.
And here, advancing toward us, in a boat,
an aged man—his hair was white with years—
was shouting: "Woe to you, corrupted souls!
Forget your hope of ever seeing Heaven:
I come to lead you to the other shore,
to the eternal dark, to fire and frost.
And you approaching there, you living soul,
keep well away from these—they are the dead."
But when he saw I made no move to go,
he said: "Another way and other harbors—
not here—will bring you passage to your shore:
a lighter craft will have to carry you."
My guide then: "Charon, don't torment yourself:
our passage has been willed above, where One
can do what He has willed; and ask no more."
Now silence fell upon the wooly cheeks
of Charon, pilot of the livid marsh,
whose eyes were ringed about with wheels of flame.
But all those spirits, naked and exhausted,
had lost their color, and they gnashed their teeth
as soon as they heard Charon's cruel words;
they execrated God and their own parents
and humankind, and then the place and time
of their conception's seed and of their birth.
Then they forgathered, huddled in one throng,
weeping aloud along that wretched shore
which waits for all who have no fear of God.
The demon Charon, with his eyes like embers,
by signaling to them, has all embark;
his oar strikes anyone who stretches out.
As, in the autumn, leaves detach themselves,
first one and then the other, till the bough
sees all its fallen garments on the ground,
similarly, the evil seed of Adam
descended from the shoreline one by one,
when signaled, as a falcon—called—will come.

Ed elli a me: "Le cose ti fier conte
quando noi fermerem li nostri passi
su la trista riviera d'Acheronte."
Allor con li occhi vergognosi e bassi,
temendo no 'l mio dir li fosse grave,
infino al fiume del parlar mi trassi.
Ed ecco verso noi venir per nave
un vecchio, bianco per antico pelo,
gridando: "Guai a voi, anime prave!
Non isperate mai veder lo cielo:
i' vegno per menarvi a l'altra riva
ne le tenebre etterne, in caldo e 'n gelo.
E tu che se' costì, anima viva,
pàrtiti da cotesti che son morti."
Ma poi che vide ch'io non mi partiva,
disse: "Per altra via, per altri porti
verrai a piaggia, non qui, per passare:
più lieve legno convien che ti porti."
E 'l duca lui: "Caron, non ti crucciare:
vuolsi così colà dove si puote
ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare."
Quinci fuor quete le lanose gote
al nocchier de la livida palude,
che 'ntorno a li occhi avea di fiamme rote.
Ma quell' anime, ch'eran lasse e nude,
cangiar colore e dibattero i denti,
ratto che 'nteser le parole crude.
Bestemmiavano Dio e lor parenti,
l'umana spezie e 'l loco e 'l tempo e 'l seme
di lor semenza e di lor nascimenti.
Poi si ritrasser tutte quante insieme,
forte piangendo, a la riva malvagia
ch'attende ciascun uom che Dio non teme.
Caron dimonio, con occhi di bragia
loro accennando, tutte le raccoglie;
batte col remo qualunque s'adagia.
Come d'autunno si levan le foglie
l'una appresso de l'altra, fin che 'l ramo
vede a la terra tutte le sue spoglie,
similemente il mal seme d'Adamo
gittansi di quel lito ad una ad una,
per cenni come augel per suo richiamo.

So do they move across the darkened waters;
even before they reach the farther shore,
new ranks already gather on this bank.
"My son," the gracious master said to me,
"those who have died beneath the wrath of God,
all these assemble here from every country;
and they are eager for the river crossing
because celestial justice spurs them on,
so that their fear is turned into desire.
No good soul ever takes its passage here;
therefore, if Charon has complained of you,
by now you can be sure what his words mean."
And after this was said, the darkened plain
quaked so tremendously—the memory
of terror then, bathes me in sweat again.
A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth,
a wind that crackled with a bloodred light,
a light that overcame all of my senses;
and like a man whom sleep has seized, I fell.

Così sen vanno su per l'onda bruna,
e avanti che sien di là discese,
anche di qua nuova schiera s'auna.
"Figliuol mio," disse 'l maestro cortese,
"quelli che muoion ne l'ira di Dio
tutti convegnon qui d'ogne paese;
e pronti sono a trapassar lo rio,
ché la divina giustizia li sprona,
sì che la tema si volve in disio.
Quinci non passa mai anima buona;
e però, se Caron di te si lagna,
ben puoi sapere omai che 'l suo dir suona."
Finito questo, la buia campagna
tremò sì forte, che de lo spavento
la mente di sudore ancor mi bagna.
La terra lagrimosa diede vento,
che balenò una luce vermiglia
la qual mi vinse ciascun sentimento;
e caddi come l'uom cui sonno piglia.



CHARON



III·112



V·46



IV·103

CANTO IV

The heavy sleep within my head was smashed
by an enormous thunderclap, so that
I started up as one whom force awakens;
  I stood erect and turned my rested eyes
from side to side, and I stared steadily
to learn what place it was surrounding me.
  In truth I found myself upon the brink
of an abyss, the melancholy valley
containing thundering, unending wailings.
  That valley, dark and deep and filled with mist,
is such that, though I gazed into its pit,
I was unable to discern a thing.
  "Let us descend into the blind world now,"
the poet, who was deathly pale, began;
"I shall go first and you will follow me."
  But I, who'd seen the change in his complexion,
said: "How shall I go on if you are frightened,
you who have always helped dispel my doubts?"
  And he to me: "The anguish of the people
whose place is here below, has touched my face
with the compassion you mistake for fear.
  Let us go on, the way that waits is long."
So he set out, and so he had me enter
on that first circle girdling the abyss.
  Here, for as much as hearing could discover,
there was no outcry louder than the sighs
that caused the everlasting air to tremble.
  The sighs arose from sorrow without torments,
out of the crowds—the many multitudes—
of infants and of women and of men.
  The kindly master said: "Do you not ask
who are these spirits whom you see before you?
I'd have you know, before you go ahead,

Dante's awakening to the First Circle, or Limbo, inhabited by those who were worthy but lived before Christianity and/or without baptism. The welcoming of Virgil and Dante by Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan. The catalogue of other great-hearted spirits in the noble castle of Limbo.

Ruppemi l'alto sonno ne la testa
un greve truono, sì ch'io mi riscossi
come persona ch'è per forza desta;
e l'occhio riposato intorno mossi,
dritto levato, e fiso riguardai
per conoscer lo loco dov' io fossi.
Vero è che 'n su la proda mi trovai
de la valle d'abisso dolorosa
che 'ntrono accoglie d'infiniti guai.
Oscura e profonda era e nebulosa
tanto che, per ficcar lo viso a fondo,
io non vi discernea alcuna cosa.
"Or discendiam qua giù nel cieco mondo,"
cominciò il poeta tutto smorto.
"Io sarò primo, e tu sarai secondo."
E io, che del color mi fui accorto,
dissi: "Come verrò, se tu paventi
che suoli al mio dubbiare esser conforto?"
Ed elli a me: "L'angoscia de le genti
che son qua giù, nel viso mi dipigne
quella pietà che tu per tema senti.
Andiam, ché la via lunga ne sospigne."
Così si mise e così mi fé intrare
nel primo cerchio che l'abisso cigne.
Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,
non avea pianto mai che di sospiri
che l'aura etterna facevan tremare;
ciò avvenia di duol sanza martìri,
ch'avean le turbe, ch'eran molte e grandi,
d'infanti e di femmine e di viri.
Lo buon maestro a me: "Tu non dimandi
che spiriti son questi che tu vedi?
Or vo' che sappi, innanzi che più andi,

they did not sin; and yet, though they have merits,
that's not enough, because they lacked baptism,
the portal of the faith that you embrace.
And if they lived before Christianity,
they did not worship God in fitting ways;
and of such spirits I myself am one.
For these defects, and for no other evil,
we now are lost and punished just with this:
we have no hope and yet we live in longing."
Great sorrow seized my heart on hearing him,
for I had seen some estimable men
among the souls suspended in that limbo.
"Tell me, my master, tell me, lord," I then
began because I wanted to be certain
of that belief which vanquishes all errors,
"did any ever go—by his own merit
or others'—from this place toward blessedness?"
And he, who understood my covert speech,
replied: "I was new-entered on this state
when I beheld a Great Lord enter here;
the crown he wore, a sign of victory.
He carried off the shade of our first father,
of his son Abel, and the shade of Noah,
of Moses, the obedient legislator,
of father Abraham, David the king,
of Israel, his father, and his sons,
and Rachel, she for whom he worked so long,
and many others—and He made them blessed;
and I should have you know that, before them,
there were no human souls that had been saved."
We did not stay our steps although he spoke;
we still continued onward through the wood—
the wood, I say, where many spirits thronged.
Our path had not gone far beyond the point
where I had slept, when I beheld a fire
win out against a hemisphere of shadows.
We still were at a little distance from it,
but not so far I could not see in part
that honorable men possessed that place.
"O you who honor art and science both,
who are these souls whose dignity has kept
their way of being, separate from the rest?"

ch'ei non peccaro; e s'elli hanno mercedi,
non basta, perché non ebber battesmo,
ch'è porta de la fede che tu credi;
e s'e' furon dinanzi al cristianesmo,
non adorar debitamente a Dio:
e di questi cotai son io medesmo.
Per tai difetti, non per altro rio,
semo perduti, e sol di tanto offesi
che sanza speme vivemo in disio."
Gran duol mi prese al cor quando lo 'ntesi,
però che gente di molto valore
conobbi che 'n quel limbo eran sospesi.
"Dimmi, maestro mio, dimmi, segnore,"
comincia' io per volere esser certo
di quella fede che vince ogne errore:
"uscicci mai alcuno, o per suo merto
o per altrui, che poi fosse beato?"
E quei che 'ntese il mio parlar coverto,
rispuose: "Io era nuovo in questo stato,
quando ci vidi venire un possente,
con segno di vittoria coronato.
Trasseci l'ombra del primo parente,
d'Abèl suo figlio e quella di Noè,
di Moïsè legista e ubidente;
Abraàm patrïarca e Davìd re,
Israèl con lo padre e co' suoi nati
e con Rachele, per cui tanto fé,
e altri molti, e feceli beati.
E vo' che sappi che, dinanzi ad essi,
spiriti umani non eran salvati."
Non lasciavam l'andar perch' ei dicessi,
ma passavam la selva tuttavia,
la selva, dico, di spiriti spessi.
Non era lunga ancor la nostra via
di qua dal sonno, quand' io vidi un foco
ch'emisperio di tenebre vincia.
Di lungi n'eravamo ancora un poco,
ma non sì ch'io non discernessi in parte
ch'orrevol gente possedea quel loco.
"O tu ch'onori scïenzïa e arte,
questi chi son c'hanno cotanta onranza,
che dal modo de li altri li diparte?"

And he to me: "The honor of their name,
which echoes up above within your life,
gains Heaven's grace, and that advances them."
Meanwhile there was a voice that I could hear:
"Pay honor to the estimable poet;
his shadow, which had left us, now returns."
After that voice was done, when there was silence,
I saw four giant shades approaching us;
in aspect, they were neither sad nor joyous.
My kindly master then began by saying:
"Look well at him who holds that sword in hand,
who moves before the other three as lord.
That shade is Homer, the consummate poet;
the other one is Horace, satirist;
the third is Ovid, and the last is Lucan.
Because each of these spirits shares with me
the name called out before by the lone voice,
they welcome me—and, doing that, do well."
And so I saw that splendid school assembled,
led by the lord of song incomparable,
who like an eagle soars above the rest.
Soon after they had talked awhile together,
they turned to me, saluting cordially;
and having witnessed this, my master smiled;
and even greater honor then was mine,
for they invited me to join their ranks—
I was the sixth among such intellects.
So did we move along and toward the light,
talking of things about which silence here
is just as seemly as our speech was there.
We reached the base of an exalted castle,
encircled seven times by towering walls,
defended all around by a fair stream.
We forded this as if upon hard ground;
I entered seven portals with these sages;
we reached a meadow of green flowering plants.
The people here had eyes both grave and slow;
their features carried great authority;
they spoke infrequently, with gentle voices.
We drew aside to one part of the meadow,
an open place both high and filled with light,
and we could see all those who were assembled.

E quelli a me: "L'onrata nominanza
che di lor suona sù ne la tua vita,
grazïa acquista in ciel che sì li avanza."
Intanto voce fu per me udita:
"Onorate l'altissimo poeta;
l'ombra sua torna, ch'era dipartita."
Poi che la voce fu restata e queta,
vidi quattro grand' ombre a noi venire:
sembianz' avevan né trista né lieta.
Lo buon maestro cominciò a dire:
"Mira colui con quella spada in mano,
che vien dinanzi ai tre sì come sire:
quelli è Omero poeta sovrano;
l'altro è Orazio satiro che vene;
Ovidio è 'l terzo, e l'ultimo Lucano.
Però che ciascun meco si convene
nel nome che sonò la voce sola,
fannomi onore, e di ciò fanno bene."
Così vid' i' adunar la bella scola
di quel segnor de l'altissimo canto
che sovra li altri com' aquila vola.
Da ch'ebber ragionato insieme alquanto,
volsersi a me con salutevol cenno,
e 'l mio maestro sorrise di tanto;
e più d'onore ancora assai mi fenno,
ch'e' sì mi fecer de la loro schiera,
sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.
Così andammo infino a la lumera,
parlando cose che 'l tacere è bello,
sì com' era 'l parlar colà dov' era.
Venimmo al piè d'un nobile castello,
sette volte cerchiato d'alte mura,
difeso intorno d'un bel fiumicello.
Questo passammo come terra dura;
per sette porte intrai con questi savi:
giugnemmo in prato di fresca verdura.
Genti v'eran con occhi tardi e gravi,
di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti:
parlavan rado, con voci soavi.
Traemmoci così da l'un de' canti,
in loco aperto, luminoso e alto,
sì che veder si potien tutti quanti.

Facing me there, on the enameled green,
great-hearted souls were shown to me and I
still glory in my having witnessed them.
I saw Electra with her many comrades,
among whom I knew Hector and Aeneas,
and Caesar, in his armor, falcon-eyed.
I saw Camilla and Penthesilea
and, on the other side, saw King Latinus,
who sat beside Lavinia, his daughter.
I saw that Brutus who drove Tarquin out,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia, and Cornelia,
and, solitary, set apart, Saladin.
When I had raised my eyes a little higher,
I saw the master of the men who know,
seated in philosophic family.
There all look up to him, all do him honor:
there I beheld both Socrates and Plato,
closest to him, in front of all the rest;
Democritus, who ascribes the world to chance,
Diogenes, Empedocles, and Zeno,
and Thales, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus;
I saw the good collector of medicinals,
I mean Dioscorides; and I saw Orpheus,
and Tully, Linus, moral Seneca;
and Euclid the geometer, and Ptolemy,
Hippocrates and Galen, Avicenna,
Averroës, of the great Commentary.
I cannot here describe them all in full;
my ample theme impels me onward so:
what's told is often less than the event.
The company of six divides in two;
my knowing guide leads me another way,
beyond the quiet, into trembling air.
And I have reached a part where no thing gleams.

Colà diritto, sovra 'l verde smalto,
mi fuor mostrati li spiriti magni,
che del vedere in me stesso m'essalto.
I' vidi Eletra con molti compagni,
tra ' quai conobbi Ettòr ed Enea,
Cesare armato con li occhi grifagni.
Vidi Cammilla e la Pantasilea;
da l'altra parte vidi 'l re Latino
che con Lavina sua figlia sedea.
Vidi quel Bruto che cacciò Tarquino,
Lucrezia, Iulia, Marzïa e Corniglia;
e solo, in parte, vidi 'l Saladino.
Poi ch'innalzai un poco più le ciglia,
vidi 'l maestro di color che sanno
seder tra filosofica famiglia.
Tutti lo miran, tutti onor li fanno:
quivi vid' ïo Socrate e Platone,
che 'nnanzi a li altri più presso li stanno;
Democrito che 'l mondo a caso pone,
Dïogenès, Anassagora e Tale,
Empedoclès, Eraclito e Zenone;
e vidi il buono accoglitor del quale,
Dïascoride dico; e vidi Orfeo,
Tulïo e Lino e Seneca morale;
Euclide geomètra e Tolomeo,
Ipocràte, Avicenna e Galïeno,
Averoìs che 'l gran comento feo.
Io non posso ritrar di tutti a pieno,
però che sì mi caccia il lungo tema,
che molte volte al fatto il dir vien meno.
La sesta compagnia in due si scema:
per altra via mi mena il savio duca,
fuor de la queta, ne l'aura che trema.
E vegno in parte ove non è che luca.

CANTO V

So I descended from the first enclosure
down to the second circle, that which girdles
less space but grief more great, that goads to weeping.
There dreadful Minos stands, gnashing his teeth:
examining the sins of those who enter,
he judges and assigns as his tail twines.
I mean that when the spirit born to evil
appears before him, it confesses all;
and he, the connoisseur of sin, can tell
the depth in Hell appropriate to it;
as many times as Minos wraps his tail
around himself, that marks the sinner's level.
Always there is a crowd that stands before him:
each soul in turn advances toward that judgment;
they speak and hear, then they are cast below.
Arresting his extraordinary task,
Minos, as soon as he had seen me, said:
"O you who reach this house of suffering,
be careful how you enter, whom you trust;
the gate is wide, but do not be deceived!"
To which my guide replied: "But why protest?
Do not attempt to block his fated path:
our passage has been willed above, where One
can do what He has willed; and ask no more."
Now notes of desperation have begun
to overtake my hearing; now I come
where mighty lamentation beats against me.
I reached a place where every light is muted,
which bellows like the sea beneath a tempest,
when it is battered by opposing winds.
The hellish hurricane, which never rests,
drives on the spirits with its violence:
wheeling and pounding, it harasses them.

The Second Circle, where the Lustful are forever buffeted by violent storm. Minos. The catalogue of carnal sinners. Francesca da Rimini and her brother-in-law, Paolo Malatesta. Francesca's tale of their love and death, at which Dante faints.

Così discesi del cerchio primaio
giù nel secondo, che men loco cinghia
e tanto più dolor, che punge a guaio.
Stavvi Minòs orribilmente, e ringhia:
essamina le colpe ne l'intrata;
giudica e manda secondo ch'avvinghia.
Dico che quando l'anima mal nata
li vien dinanzi, tutta si confessa;
e quel conoscitor de le peccata
vede qual loco d'inferno è da essa;
cignesi con la coda tante volte
quantunque gradi vuol che giù sia messa.
Sempre dinanzi a lui ne stanno molte:
vanno a vicenda ciascuna al giudizio,
dicono e odono e poi son giù volte.
"O tu che vieni al doloroso ospizio,"
disse Minòs a me quando mi vide,
lasciando l'atto di cotanto offizio,
"guarda com' entri e di cui tu ti fide;
non t'inganni l'ampiezza de l'intrare!"
E 'l duca mio a lui: "Perché pur gride?
Non impedir lo suo fatale andare:
vuolsi così colà dove si puote
ciò che si vuole, e più non dimandare."
Or incomincian le dolenti note
a farmisi sentire; or son venuto
là dove molto pianto mi percuote.
Io venni in loco d'ogne luce muto,
che mugghia come fa mar per tempesta,
se da contrari venti è combattuto.
La bufera infernal, che mai non resta,
mena li spirti con la sua rapina;
voltando e percotendo li molesta.

When they come up against the ruined slope,
then there are cries and wailing and lament,
and there they curse the force of the divine.
I learned that those who undergo this torment
are damned because they sinned within the flesh,
subjecting reason to the rule of lust.
And as, in the cold season, starlings' wings
bear them along in broad and crowded ranks,
so does that blast bear on the guilty spirits:
now here, now there, now down, now up, it drives them.
There is no hope that ever comforts them—
no hope for rest and none for lesser pain.
And just as cranes in flight will chant their lays,
arraying their long file across the air,
so did the shades I saw approaching, borne
by that assailing wind, lament and moan;
so that I asked him: "Master, who are those
who suffer punishment in this dark air?"
"The first of those about whose history
you want to know," my master then told me,
"once ruled as empress over many nations.
Her vice of lust became so customary
that she made license licit in her laws
to free her from the scandal she had caused.
She is Semíramis, of whom we read
that she was Ninus' wife and his successor:
she held the land the Sultan now commands.
That other spirit killed herself for love,
and she betrayed the ashes of Sychaeus;
the wanton Cleopatra follows next.
See Helen, for whose sake so many years
of evil had to pass; see great Achilles,
who finally met love—in his last battle.
See Paris, Tristan . . ."—and he pointed out
and named to me more than a thousand shades
departed from our life because of love.
No sooner had I heard my teacher name
the ancient ladies and the knights, than pity
seized me, and I was like a man astray.
My first words: "Poet, I should willingly
speak with those two who go together there
and seem so lightly carried by the wind."

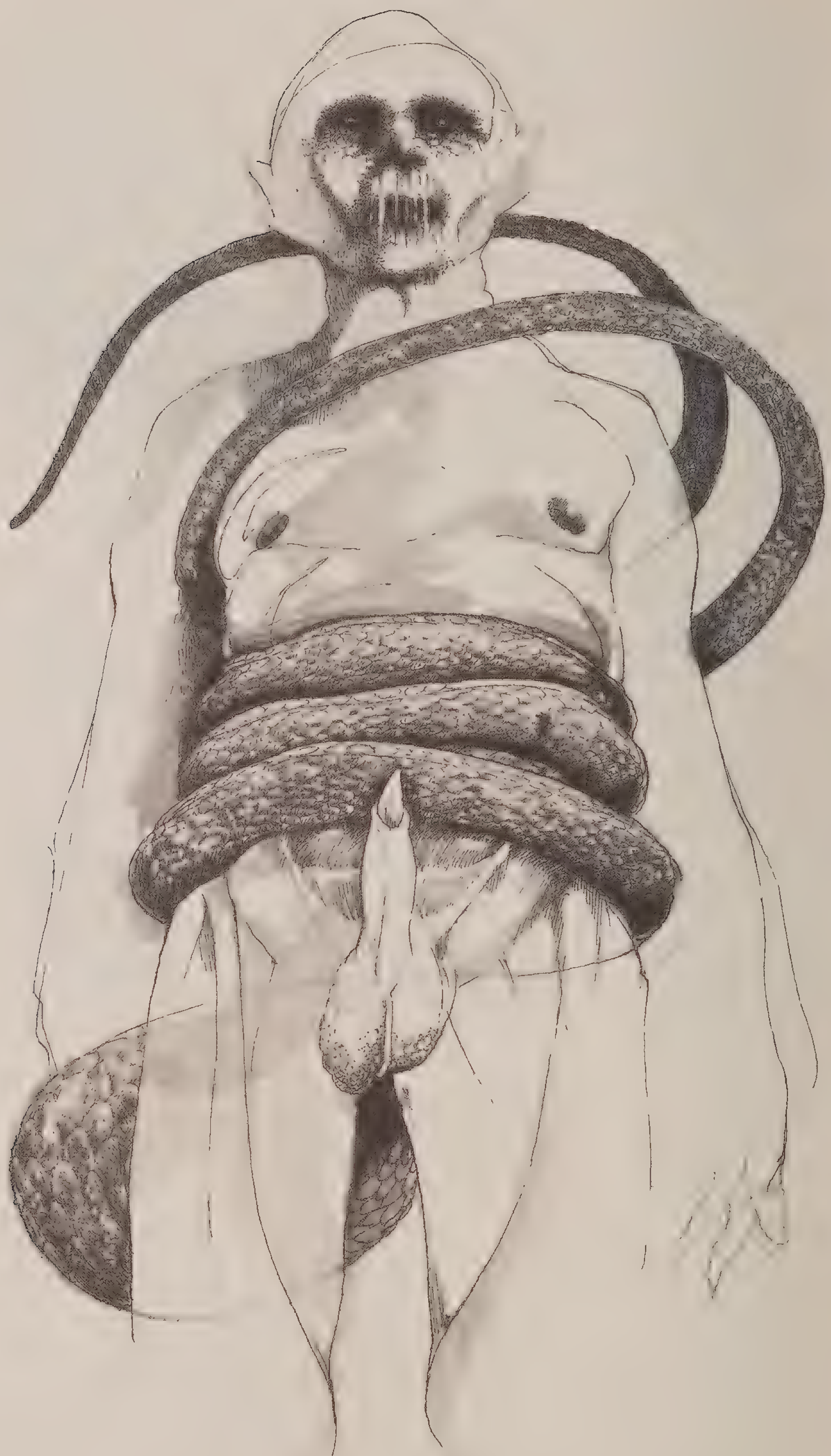
Quando giungon davanti a la ruina, 34
quivi le strida, il compianto, il lamento;
bestemmian quivi la virtù divina.
Intesi ch'a così fatto tormento 37
enno dannati i peccator carnali,
che la ragion sommettono al talento.
E come li stornei ne portan l'ali 40
nel freddo tempo, a schiera larga e piena,
così quel fiato li spiriti mali
di qua, di là, di giù, di sù li mena; 43
nulla speranza li conforta mai,
non che di posa, ma di minor pena.
E come i gru van cantando lor lai, 46
faccendo in aere di sé lunga riga,
così vid' io venir, traendo guai,
ombre portate da la detta briga; 49
per ch'i' dissi: "Maestro, chi son quelle
genti che l'aura nera sì gastiga?"
"La prima di color di cui novelle 52
tu vuo' saper," mi disse quelli allotta,
"fu imperadrice di molte favelle.
A vizio di lussuria fu sì rotta, 55
che libito fé licito in sua legge,
per tòrre il biasmo in che era condotta.
Ell' è Semiramìs, di cui si legge 58
che succedette a Nino e fu sua sposa:
tenne la terra che 'l Soldan corregge.
L'altra è colei che s'ancise amorosa, 61
e ruppe fede al cener di Sicheo;
poi è Cleopatràs lussurïosa.
Elena vedi, per cui tanto reo 64
tempo si volse, e vedi 'l grande Achille,
che con amore al fine combatteo.
Vedi Parìs, Tristano"; e più di mille 67
ombre mostrommi e nominommi a dito,
ch'amor di nostra vita dipartille.
Poscia ch'io ebbi 'l mio dottore udito 70
nomar le donne antiche e ' cavalieri,
pietà mi giunse, e fui quasi smarrito.
I' cominciai: "Poeta, volontieri 73
parlerei a quei due che 'nsieme vanno,
e paion sì al vento esser leggieri."

And he to me: "You'll see when they draw closer
to us, and then you may appeal to them
by that love which impels them. They will come."
No sooner had the wind bent them toward us
than I urged on my voice: "O battered souls,
if One does not forbid it, speak with us."
Even as doves when summoned by desire,
borne forward by their will, move through the air
with wings uplifted, still, to their sweet nest,
those spirits left the ranks where Dido suffers,
approaching us through the malignant air;
so powerful had been my loving cry.
"O living being, gracious and benign,
who through the darkened air have come to visit
our souls that stained the world with blood, if He
who rules the universe were friend to us,
then we should pray to Him to give you peace,
for you have pitied our atrocious state.
Whatever pleases you to hear and speak
will please us, too, to hear and speak with you,
now while the wind is silent, in this place.
The land where I was born lies on that shore
to which the Po together with the waters
that follow it descends to final rest.
Love, that can quickly seize the gentle heart,
took hold of him because of the fair body
taken from me—how that was done still wounds me.
Love, that releases no beloved from loving,
took hold of me so strongly through his beauty
that, as you see, it has not left me yet.
Love led the two of us unto one death.
Caïna waits for him who took our life."
These words were borne across from them to us.
When I had listened to those injured souls,
I bent my head and held it low until
the poet asked of me: "What are you thinking?"
When I replied, my words began: "Alas,
how many gentle thoughts, how deep a longing,
had led them to the agonizing pass!"
Then I addressed my speech again to them,
and I began: "Francesca, your afflictions
move me to tears of sorrow and of pity.

Ed elli a me: "Vedrai quando saranno
più presso a noi; e tu allor li priega
per quello amor che i mena, ed ei verranno."
Sì tosto come il vento a noi li piega,
mossi la voce: "O anime affannate,
venite a noi parlar, s'altri nol niega!"
Quali colombe dal disio chiamate
con l'ali alzate e ferme al dolce nido
vegnon per l'aere, dal voler portate;
cotali uscir de la schiera ov' è Dido,
a noi venendo per l'aere maligno,
sì forte fu l'affettüoso grido.
"O animal grazïoso e benigno
che visitando vai per l'aere perso
noi che tignemmo il mondo di sanguigno,
se fosse amico il re de l'universo,
noi pregheremmo lui de la tua pace,
poi c'hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.
Di quel che udire e che parlar vi piace,
noi udiremo e parleremo a voi,
mentre che 'l vento, come fa, ci tace.
Siede la terra dove nata fui
su la marina dove 'l Po discende
per aver pace co' seguaci sui.
Amor, ch'al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,
prese costui de la bella persona
che mi fu tolta; e 'l modo ancor m'offende.
Amor, ch'a nullo amato amar perdona,
mi prese del costui piacer sì forte,
che, come vedi, ancor non m'abbandona.
Amor condusse noi ad una morte.
Caina attende chi a vita ci spense."
Queste parole da lor ci fuor porte.
Quand' io intesi quell' anime offense,
china' il viso, e tanto il tenni basso,
fin che 'l poeta mi disse: "Che pense?"
Quando rispuosi, cominciai: "Oh lasso,
quanti dolci pensier, quanto disio
menò costoro al doloroso passo!"
Poi mi rivolsi a loro e parla' io,
e cominciai: "Francesca, i tuoi martìri
a lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.

But tell me, in the time of gentle sighs,
with what and in what way did Love allow you
to recognize your still uncertain longings?"
And she to me: "There is no greater sorrow
than thinking back upon a happy time
in misery—and this your teacher knows.
Yet if you long so much to understand
the first root of our love, then I shall tell
my tale to you as one who weeps and speaks.
One day, to pass the time away, we read
of Lancelot—how love had overcome him.
We were alone, and we suspected nothing.
And time and time again that reading led
our eyes to meet, and made our faces pale,
and yet one point alone defeated us.
When we had read how the desired smile
was kissed by one who was so true a lover,
this one, who never shall be parted from me,
while all his body trembled, kissed my mouth.
A Gallehault indeed, that book and he
who wrote it, too; that day we read no more."
And while one spirit said these words to me,
the other wept, so that—because of pity—
I fainted, as if I had met my death.
And then I fell as a dead body falls.

Ma dimmi: al tempo d'i dolci sospiri,
a che e come concedette amore
che conosceste i dubbiosi disiri?"
E quella a me: "Nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
ne la miseria; e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.
Ma s'a conoscer la prima radice
del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
dirò come colui che piange e dice.
Noi leggiavamo un giorno per diletto
di Lancialotto come amor lo strinse;
soli eravamo e sanza alcun sospetto.
Per più fïate li occhi ci sospinse
quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso;
ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo il disïato riso
esser basciato da cotanto amante,
questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
la bocca mi basciò tutto tremante.
Galeotto fu 'l libro e chi lo scrisse:
quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante."
Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse,
l'altro piangëa; sì che di pietade
io venni men così com' io morisse.
E caddi come corpo morto cade.



V·4

VI·13

CANTO VI

Upon my mind's reviving—it had closed
on hearing the lament of those two kindred,
since sorrow had confounded me completely—
I see new sufferings, new sufferers
surrounding me on every side, wherever
I move or turn about or set my eyes.
I am in the third circle, filled with cold,
unending, heavy, and accursèd rain;
its measure and its kind are never changed.
Gross hailstones, water gray with filth, and snow
come streaking down across the shadowed air;
the earth, as it receives that shower, stinks.
Over the souls of those submerged beneath
that mess, is an outlandish, vicious beast,
his three throats barking, doglike: Cerberus.
His eyes are bloodred; greasy, black, his beard;
his belly bulges, and his hands are claws;
his talons tear and flay and rend the shades.
That downpour makes the sinners howl like dogs;
they use one of their sides to screen the other—
those miserable wretches turn and turn.
When Cerberus, the great worm, noticed us,
he opened wide his mouths, showed us his fangs;
there was no part of him that did not twitch.
My guide opened his hands to their full span,
plucked up some earth, and with his fists filled full
he hurled it straight into those famished jaws.
Just as a dog that barks with greedy hunger
will then fall quiet when he gnaws his food,
intent and straining hard to cram it in,
so were the filthy faces of the demon
Cerberus transformed—after he'd stunned
the spirits so, they wished that they were deaf.

Dante's awakening to the Third Circle, where the Gluttonous, supine, are flailed by cold and filthy rain and tormented by Cerberus. Ciacco and his prophecy concerning Florence. The state of the damned after the Resurrection.

Al tornar de la mente, che si chiuse
dinanzi a la pietà d'i due cognati,
che di trestizia tutto mi confuse,
novi tormenti e novi tormentati
mi veggio intorno, come ch'io mi mova
e ch'io mi volga, e come che io guati.
Io sono al terzo cerchio, de la piova
etterna, maladetta, fredda e greve;
regola e qualità mai non l'è nova.
Grandine grossa, acqua tinta e neve
per l'aere tenebroso si riversa;
pute la terra che questo riceve.
Cerbero, fiera crudele e diversa,
con tre gole caninamente latra
sovra la gente che quivi è sommersa.
Li occhi ha vermigli, la barba unta e atra,
e 'l ventre largo, e unghiate le mani;
graffia li spirti ed iscoia ed isquatra.
Urlar li fa la pioggia come cani;
de l'un de' lati fanno a l'altro schermo;
volgonsi spesso i miseri profani.
Quando ci scorse Cerbero, il gran vermo,
le bocche aperse e mostrocci le sanne;
non avea membro che tenesse fermo.
E 'l duca mio distese le sue spanne,
prese la terra, e con piene le pugna
la gittò dentro a le bramose canne.
Qual è quel cane ch'abbaiando agogna,
e si racqueta poi che 'l pasto morde,
ché solo a divorarlo intende e pugna,
cotai si fecer quelle facce lorde
de lo demonio Cerbero, che 'ntrona
l'anime sì, ch'esser vorrebber sorde.

We walked across the shades on whom there thuds
that heavy rain, and set our soles upon
their empty images that seem like persons.
And all those spirits lay upon the ground,
except for one who sat erect as soon
as he caught sight of us in front of him.
"O you who are conducted through this Hell,"
he said to me, "recall me, if you can;
for you, before I was unmade, were made."
And I to him: "It is perhaps your anguish
that snatches you out of my memory,
so that it seems that I have never seen you.
But tell me who you are, you who are set
in such a dismal place, such punishment—
if other pains are more, none's more disgusting."
And he to me: "Your city—one so full
of envy that its sack has always spilled—
that city held me in the sunlit life.
The name you citizens gave me was Ciacco;
and for the damning sin of gluttony,
as you can see, I languish in the rain.
And I, a wretched soul, am not alone,
for all of these have this same penalty
for this same sin." And he said nothing more.
I answered him: "Ciacco, your suffering
so weights on me that I am forced to weep;
but tell me, if you know, what end awaits
the citizens of that divided city;
is any just man there? Tell me the reason
why it has been assailed by so much schism."
And he to me: "After long controversy,
they'll come to blood; the party of the woods
will chase the other out with much offense.
But then, within three suns, they too must fall;
at which the other party will prevail,
using the power of one who tacks his sails.
This party will hold high its head for long
and heap great weights upon its enemies,
however much they weep indignantly.
Two men are just, but no one listens to them.
Three sparks that set on fire every heart
are envy, pride, and avariciousness."

Noi passavam su per l'ombre che adona
la greve pioggia, e ponavam le piante
sovra lor vanità che par persona.
Elle giacean per terra tutte quante,
fuor d'una ch'a seder si levò, ratto
ch'ella ci vide passarsi davante.
"O tu che se' per questo 'nferno tratto,"
mi disse, "riconoscimi, se sai:
tu fosti, prima ch'io disfatto, fatto."
E io a lui: "L'angoscia che tu hai
forse ti tira fuor de la mia mente,
sì che non par ch'i' ti vedessi mai.
Ma dimmi chi tu se' che 'n sì dolente
loco se' messo, e hai sì fatta pena,
che, s'altra è maggio, nulla è sì spiacente."
Ed elli a me: "La tua città, ch'è piena
d'invidia sì che già trabocca il sacco,
seco mi tenne in la vita serena.
Voi cittadini mi chiamaste Ciacco:
per la dannosa colpa de la gola,
come tu vedi, a la pioggia mi fiacco.
E io anima trista non son sola,
ché tutte queste a simil pena stanno
per simil colpa." E più non fé parola.
Io li rispuosi: "Ciacco, il tuo affanno
mi pesa sì, ch'a lagrimar mi 'nvita;
ma dimmi, se tu sai, a che verranno
li cittadin de la città partita;
s'alcun v'è giusto; e dimmi la cagione
per che l'ha tanta discordia assalita."
E quelli a me: "Dopo lunga tencione
verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia
caccerà l'altra con molta offensione.
Poi appresso convien che questa caggia
infra tre soli, e che l'altra sormonti
con la forza di tal che testé piaggia.
Alte terrà lungo tempo le fronti,
tenendo l'altra sotto gravi pesi,
come che di ciò pianga o che n'aonti.
Giusti son due, e non vi sono intesi;
superbia, invidia e avarizia sono
le tre faville c'hanno i cuori accesi."

With this, his words, inciting tears, were done;
and I to him: "I would learn more from you;
I ask you for a gift of further speech:
Tegghiaio, Farinata, men so worthy,
Arrigo, Mosca, Jacopo Rusticucci,
and all the rest whose minds bent toward the good,
do tell me where they are and let me meet them;
for my great longing drives me on to learn
if Heaven sweetens or Hell poisons them."
And he: "They are among the blackest souls;
a different sin has dragged them to the bottom;
if you descend so low, there you can see them.
But when you have returned to the sweet world,
I pray, recall me to men's memory:
I say no more to you, answer no more."
Then his straight gaze grew twisted and awry;
he looked at me awhile, then bent his head;
he fell as low as all his blind companions.
And my guide said to me: "He'll rise no more
until the blast of the angelic trumpet
upon the coming of the hostile Judge:
each one shall see his sorry tomb again
and once again take on his flesh and form,
and hear what shall resound eternally."
So did we pass across that squalid mixture
of shadows and of rain, our steps slowed down,
talking awhile about the life to come.
At which I said: "And after the great sentence—
o master—will these torments grow, or else
be less, or will they be just as intense?"
And he to me: "Remember now your science,
which says that when a thing has more perfection,
so much the greater is its pain or pleasure.
Though these accursed sinners never shall
attain the true perfection, yet they can
expect to be more perfect then than now."
We took the circling way traced by that road;
we said much more than I can here recount;
we reached the point that marks the downward slope.
Here we found Plutus, the great enemy.

Qui puose fine al lagrimabil suono.
E io a lui: "Ancor vo' che mi 'nsegni
e che di più parlar mi facci dono.
Farinata e 'l Tegghiaio, che fuor sì degni,
Iacopo Rusticucci, Arrigo e 'l Mosca
e li altri ch'a ben far puoser li 'ngegni
dimmi ove sono e fa ch'io li conosca;
ché gran disio mi stringe di savere
se 'l ciel li addolcia o lo 'nferno li attosca."
E quelli: "Ei son tra l'anime più nere;
diverse colpe giù li grava al fondo:
se tanto scendi, là i potrai vedere.
Ma quando tu sarai nel dolce mondo,
priegoti ch'a la mente altrui mi rechi:
più non ti dico e più non ti rispondo."
Li diritti occhi torse allora in biechi;
guardommi un poco e poi chinò la testa:
cadde con essa a par de li altri ciechi.
E 'l duca disse a me: "Più non si desta
di qua dal suon de l'angelica tromba,
quando verrà la nimica podesta:
ciascun rivederà la trista tomba,
ripiglierà sua carne e sua figura,
udirà quel ch'in etterno rimbomba."
Sì trapassammo per sozza mistura
de l'ombre e de la pioggia, a passi lenti,
toccando un poco la vita futura;
per ch'io dissi: "Maestro, esti tormenti
crescerann' ei dopo la gran sentenza,
o fier minori, o saran sì cocenti?"
Ed elli a me: "Ritorna a tua scïenza,
che vuol, quanto la cosa è più perfetta,
più senta il bene, e così la doglienza.
Tutto che questa gente maladetta
in vera perfezion già mai non vada,
di là più che di qua essere aspetta."
Noi aggirammo a tondo quella strada,
parlando più assai ch'i' non ridico;
venimmo al punto dove si digrada:
quivi trovammo Pluto, il gran nemico.

CANTO VII

"Pape Satàn, pape Satàn aleppe!"
so Plutus, with his grating voice, began.
The gentle sage, aware of everything,
said reassuringly, "Don't let your fear
defeat you; for whatever power he has,
he cannot stop our climbing down this crag."
Then he turned back to Plutus' swollen face
and said to him: "Be quiet, cursed wolf!
Let your vindictiveness feed on yourself.
His is no random journey to the deep:
it has been willed on high, where Michael took
revenge upon the arrogant rebellion."
As sails inflated by the wind collapse,
entangled in a heap, when the mast cracks,
so that ferocious beast fell to the ground.
Thus we made our way down to the fourth ditch,
to take in more of that despondent shore
where all the universe's ill is stored.
Justice of God! Who has amassed as many
strange tortures and travails as I have seen?
Why do we let our guilt consume us so?
Even as waves that break above Charybdis,
each shattering the other when they meet,
so must the spirits here dance their round dance.
Here, more than elsewhere, I saw multitudes
to every side of me; their howls were loud
while, wheeling weights, they used their chests to push.
They struck against each other; at that point,
each turned around and, wheeling back those weights,
cried out: "Why do you hoard?" "Why do you squander?"
So did they move around the sorry circle
from left and right to the opposing point;
again, again they cried their chant of scorn;

The demon Plutus. The Fourth Circle, where the Avaricious and the Prodigal, in opposite directions, roll weights in semicircles. Fortune and her ways. Descent into the Fifth Circle: the Wrathful and the Sullen, the former besmirched by the muddy Styx, the latter immersed in it.

"Pape Satàn, pape Satàn, aleppe!"
cominciò Pluto con la voce chioccia;
e quel savio gentil, che tutto seppe,
disse per confortarmi: "Non ti noccia
la tua paura; ché, poder ch'elli abbia,
non ci torrà lo scender questa roccia."
Poi si rivolse a quella 'nfiata labbia,
e disse: "Taci, maladetto lupo!
consuma dentro te con la tua rabbia.
Non è sanza cagion l'andare al cupo:
vuolsi ne l'alto, là dove Michele
fé la vendetta del superbo strupo."
Quali dal vento le gonfiate vele
caggiono avvolte, poi che l'alber fiacca,
tal cadde a terra la fiera crudele.
Così scendemmo ne la quarta lacca,
pigliando più de la dolente ripa
che 'l mal de l'universo tutto insacca.
Ahi giustizia di Dio! tante chi stipa
nove travaglie e pene quant' io viddi?
e perché nostra colpa sì ne scipa?
Come fa l'onda là sovra Cariddi,
che si frange con quella in cui s'intoppa,
così convien che qui la gente riddi.
Qui vid' i' gente più ch'altrove troppa,
e d'una parte e d'altra, con grand' urli,
voltando pesi per forza di poppa.
Percotëansi 'ncontro; e poscia pur lì
si rivolgea ciascun, voltando a retro,
gridando: "Perché tieni?" e "Perché burli?"
Così tornavan per lo cerchio tetro
da ogne mano a l'opposito punto,
gridandosi anche loro ontoso metro;

and so, when each of them had changed positions,
he circled halfway back to his next joust.
And I, who felt my heart almost pierced through,
requested: "Master, show me now what shades
are these and tell me if they all were clerics—
those tonsured ones who circle on our left."
And he to me: "All these, to left and right
were so squint-eyed of mind in the first life—
no spending that they did was done with measure.
Their voices bark this out with clarity
when they have reached the two points of the circle
where their opposing guilts divide their ranks.
These to the left—their heads bereft of hair—
were clergymen, and popes and cardinals,
within whom avarice works its excess."
And I to him: "Master, among this kind
I certainly might hope to recognize
some who have been bespattered by these crimes."
And he to me: "That thought of yours is empty:
the undiscerning life that made them filthy
now renders them unrecognizable.
For all eternity they'll come to blows:
these here will rise up from their sepulchers
with fists clenched tight; and these, with hair cropped close.
Ill giving and ill keeping have robbed both
of the fair world and set them to this fracas—
what that is like, my words need not embellish.
Now you can see, my son, how brief's the sport
of all those goods that are in Fortune's care,
for which the tribe of men contend and brawl;
for all the gold that is or ever was
beneath the moon could never offer rest
to even one of these exhausted spirits."
"Master," I asked of him, "now tell me too:
this Fortune whom you've touched upon just now—
what's she, who clutches so all the world's goods?"
And he to me: "O unenlightened creatures,
how deep—the ignorance that hampers you!
I want you to digest my word on this.
Who made the heavens and who gave them guides
was He whose wisdom transcends everything;
that every part may shine unto the other,

poi si volgea ciascun, quand' era giunto,
per lo suo mezzo cerchio a l'altra giostra.
E io, ch'avea lo cor quasi compunto,
dissi: "Maestro mio, or mi dimostra
che gente è questa, e se tutti fuor cherci
questi chercuti a la sinistra nostra."
Ed elli a me: "Tutti quanti fuor guerci
sì de la mente in la vita primaia,
che con misura nullo spendio ferci.
Assai la voce lor chiaro l'abbaia,
quando vegnono a' due punti del cerchio
dove colpa contraria li dispaia.
Questi fuor cherci, che non han coperchio
piloso al capo, e papi e cardinali,
in cui usa avarizia il suo soperchio."
E io: "Maestro, tra questi cotali
dovre' io ben riconoscere alcuni
che furo immondi di cotesti mali."
Ed elli a me: "Vano pensiero aduni:
la sconoscente vita che i fé sozzi,
ad ogne conoscenza or li fa bruni.
In etterno verranno a li due cozzi:
questi resurgeranno del sepulcro
col pugno chiuso, e questi coi crin mozzi.
Mal dare e mal tener lo mondo pulcro
ha tolto loro, e posti a questa zuffa:
qual ella sia, parole non ci appulcro.
Or puoi, figliuol, veder la corta buffa
d'i ben che son commessi a la fortuna,
per che l'umana gente si rabuffa;
ché tutto l'oro ch'è sotto la luna
e che già fu, di quest' anime stanche
non poterebbe farne posare una."
"Maestro mio," diss' io, "or mi dì anche:
questa fortuna di che tu mi tocche,
che è, che i ben del mondo ha sì tra branche?"
E quelli a me: "Oh creature sciocche,
quanta ignoranza è quella che v'offende!
Or vo' che tu mia sentenza ne 'mbocche.
Colui lo cui saver tutto trascende,
fece li cieli e diè lor chi conduce
sì, ch'ogne parte ad ogne parte splende,

He had the light apportioned equally;
similarly, for wordly splendors, He
ordained a general minister and guide
to shift, from time to time, those empty goods
from nation unto nation, clan to clan,
in ways that human reason can't prevent;
just so, one people rules, one languishes,
obeying the decision she has given,
which, like a serpent in the grass, is hidden.
Your knowledge cannot stand against her force;
for she foresees and judges and maintains
her kingdom as the other gods do theirs.
The changes that she brings are without respite:
it is necessity that makes her swift;
and for this reason, men change state so often.
She is the one so frequently maligned
even by those who should give praise to her—
they blame her wrongfully with words of scorn.
But she is blessed and does not hear these things;
for with the other primal beings, happy,
she turns her sphere and glories in her bliss.
But now let us descend to greater sorrow,
for every star that rose when I first moved
is setting now; we cannot stay too long."
We crossed the circle to the other shore;
we reached a foaming watercourse that spills
into a trench formed by its overflow.
That stream was even darker than deep purple;
and we, together with those shadowed waves,
moved downward and along a strange pathway.
When it has reached the foot of those malign
gray slopes, that melancholy stream descends,
forming a swamp that bears the name of Styx.
And I, who was intent on watching it,
could make out muddied people in that slime,
all naked and their faces furious.
These struck each other not with hands alone,
but with their heads and chests and with their feet,
and tore each other piecemeal with their teeth.
The kindly master told me: "Son, now see
the souls of those whom anger has defeated;
and I should also have you know for certain

distribuendo igualmente la luce.
Similemente a li splendor mondani
ordinò general ministra e duce
che permutasse a tempo li ben vani
di gente in gente e d'uno in altro sangue,
oltre la difension d'i senni umani;
per ch'una gente impera e l'altra langue,
seguendo lo giudicio di costei,
che è occulto come in erba l'angue.
Vostro saver non ha contasto a lei:
questa provede, giudica, e persegue
suo regno come il loro li altri dèi.
Le sue permutazion non hanno triegue:
necessità la fa esser veloce;
sì spesso vien chi vicenda consegue.
Quest' è colei ch'è tanto posta in croce
pur da color che le dovrien dar lode,
dandole biasmo a torto e mala voce;
ma ella s'è beata e ciò non ode:
con l'altre prime creature lieta
volve sua spera e beata si gode.
Or discendiamo omai a maggior pieta;
già ogne stella cade che saliva
quand' io mi mossi, e 'l troppo star si vieta."
Noi ricidemmo il cerchio a l'altra riva
sovr' una fonte che bolle e riversa
per un fossato che da lei deriva.
L'acqua era buia assai più che persa;
e noi, in compagnia de l'onde bige,
intrammo giù per una via diversa.
In la palude va c'ha nome Stige
questo tristo ruscel, quand' è disceso
al piè de le maligne piagge grige.
E io, che di mirare stava inteso,
vidi genti fangose in quel pantano,
ignude tutte, con sembiante offeso.
Queste si percotean non pur con mano,
ma con la testa e col petto e coi piedi,
troncandosi co' denti a brano a brano.
Lo buon maestro disse: "Figlio, or vedi
l'anime di color cui vinse l'ira;
e anche vo' che tu per certo credi

that underneath the water there are souls
who sigh and make this plain of water bubble,
as your eye, looking anywhere, can tell.
Wedged in the slime, they say: 'We had been sullen
in the sweet air that's gladdened by the sun;
we bore the mist of sluggishness in us:
now we are bitter in the blackened mud.'
This hymn they have to gurgle in their gullets,
because they cannot speak it in full words."
And so, between the dry shore and the swamp,
we circled much of that disgusting pond,
our eyes upon the swallowers of slime.
We came at last upon a tower's base.

che sotto l'acqua è gente che sospira,
e fanno pullular quest' acqua al summo,
come l'occhio ti dice, u' che s'aggira.
Fitti nel limo dicon: 'Tristi fummo
ne l'aere dolce che dal sol s'allegra,
portando dentro accidïoso fummo:
or ci attristiam ne la belletta negra.'
Quest' inno si gorgoglian ne la strozza,
ché dir nol posson con parola integra."
Così girammo de la lorda pozza
grand' arco, tra la ripa secca e 'l mézzo,
con li occhi vòlti a chi del fango ingozza.
Venimmo al piè d'una torre al da sezzo.



... the ranks where Dido suffers

V·85

IX·79

So did the thousand ruined souls…



CANTO VIII

I say, continuing, that long before
we two had reached the foot of that tall tower,
our eyes had risen upward, toward its summit,
because of two small flames that flickered there,
while still another flame returned their signal,
so far off it was scarcely visible.
And I turned toward the sea of all good sense;
I said: "What does this mean? And what reply
comes from that other fire? Who kindled it?"
And he to me: "Above the filthy waters
you can already see what waits for us,
if it's not hid by vapors from the marsh."
Bowstring has not thrust from itself an arrow
that ever rushed as swiftly through the air
as did the little bark that at that moment
I saw as it skimmed toward us on the water,
a solitary boatman at its helm.
I heard him howl: "Now you are caught, foul soul!"
"O Phlegyas, Phlegyas, such a shout is useless
this time," my master said; "we're yours no longer
than it will take to cross the muddy sluice."
And just as one who hears some great deception
was done to him, and then resents it, so
was Phlegyas when he had to store his anger.
My guide preceded me into the boat.
Once he was in, he had me follow him;
there seemed to be no weight until I boarded.
No sooner were my guide and I embarked
than off that ancient prow went, cutting water
more deeply than it does when bearing others.
And while we steered across the stagnant channel,
before me stood a sinner thick with mud,
saying: "Who are you, come before your time?"

Still the Fifth Circle: the Wrathful and the Sullen. The tall tower. Phlegyas and the crossing of the Styx. Filippo Argenti and Dante's fury. Approach to Dis, the lower part of Hell: its moat, its walls, its gate. The demons, fallen angels, and their obstruction of the poets' entry into Dis.

Io dico, seguitando, ch'assai prima
che noi fossimo al piè de l'alta torre,
li occhi nostri n'andar suso a la cima
per due fiammette che i vedemmo porre,
e un'altra da lungi render cenno,
tanto ch'a pena il potea l'occhio tòrre.
E io mi volsi al mar di tutto 'l senno;
dissi: "Questo che dice? e che risponde
quell' altro foco? e chi son quei che 'l fenno?"
Ed elli a me: "Su per le sucide onde
già scorgere puoi quello che s'aspetta,
se 'l fummo del pantan nol ti nasconde."
Corda non pinse mai da sé saetta
che sì corresse via per l'aere snella,
com' io vidi una nave piccioletta
venir per l'acqua verso noi in quella,
sotto 'l governo d'un sol galeoto,
che gridava: "Or se' giunta, anima fella!"
"Flegïàs, Flegïàs, tu gridi a vòto,"
disse lo mio segnore, "a questa volta:
più non ci avrai che sol passando il loto."
Qual è colui che grande inganno ascolta
che li sia fatto, e poi se ne rammarca,
fecesi Flegïàs ne l'ira accolta.
Lo duca mio discese ne la barca,
e poi mi fece intrare appresso lui;
e sol quand' io fui dentro parve carca.
Tosto che 'l duca e io nel legno fui,
segando se ne va l'antica prora
de l'acqua più che non suol con altrui.
Mentre noi corravam la morta gora,
dinanzi mi si fece un pien di fango,
e disse: "Chi se' tu che vieni anzi ora?"

And I to him: "I've come, but I don't stay;
but who are you, who have become so ugly?"
He answered: "You can see—I'm one who weeps."
And I to him: "In weeping and in grieving,
accursèd spirit, may you long remain;
though you're disguised by filth, I know your name."
Then he stretched both his hands out toward the boat,
at which my master quickly shoved him back,
saying: "Be off there with the other dogs!"
That done, he threw his arms around my neck
and kissed my face and said: "Indignant soul,
blessèd is she who bore you in her womb!
When in the world, he was presumptuous;
there is no good to gild his memory,
and so his shade down here is hot with fury.
How many up above now count themselves
great kings, who'll wallow here like pigs in slime,
leaving behind foul memories of their crimes!"
And I: "O master, I am very eager
to see that spirit soused within this broth
before we've made our way across the lake."
And he to me: "Before the other shore
comes into view, you shall be satisfied;
to gratify so fine a wish is right."
Soon after I had heard these words, I saw
the muddy sinners so dismember him
that even now I praise and thank God for it.
They all were shouting: "At Filippo Argenti!"
At this, the Florentine, gone wild with spleen,
began to turn his teeth against himself.
We left him there; I tell no more of him.
But in my ears so loud a wailing pounded
that I lean forward, all intent to see.
The kindly master said: "My son, the city
that bears the name of Dis is drawing near,
with its grave citizens, its great battalions."
I said: "I can already see distinctly—
master—the mosques that gleam within the valley,
as crimson as if they had just been drawn
out of the fire." He told me: "The eternal
flame burning there appears to make them red,
as you can see, within this lower Hell."

E io a lui: "S'i' vegno, non rimango;
ma tu chi se', che sì se' fatto brutto?"
Rispuose: "Vedi che son un che piango."
E io lui: "Con piangere e con lutto,
spirito maladetto, ti rimani;
ch'i' ti conosco, ancor sie lordo tutto."
Allor distese al legno ambo le mani;
per che 'l maestro accorto lo sospinse,
dicendo: "Via costà con li altri cani!"
Lo collo poi con le braccia mi cinse;
basciommi 'l volto e disse: "Alma sdegnosa,
benedetta colei che 'n te s'incinse!
Quei fu al mondo persona orgogliosa;
bontà non è che sua memoria fregi:
così s'è l'ombra sua qui furïosa.
Quanti si tegnon or là sù gran regi
che qui staranno come porci in brago,
di sé lasciando orribili dispregi!"
E io: "Maestro, molto sarei vago
di vederlo attuffare in questa broda
prima che noi uscissimo del lago."
Ed elli a me: "Avante che la proda
ti si lasci veder, tu sarai sazio:
di tal disïo convien che tu goda."
Dopo ciò poco vid' io quello strazio
far di costui a le fangose genti,
che Dio ancor ne lodo e ne ringrazio.
Tutti gridavano: "A Filippo Argenti!"
e 'l fiorentino spirito bizzarro
in sé medesmo si volvea co' denti.
Quivi il lasciammo, che più non ne narro;
ma ne l'orecchie mi percosse un duolo,
per ch'io avante l'occhio intento sbarro.
Lo buon maestro disse: "Omai, figliuolo,
s'appressa la città c'ha nome Dite,
coi gravi cittadin, col grande stuolo."
E io: "Maestro, già le sue meschite
là entro certe ne la valle cerno,
vermiglie come se di foco uscite
fossero." Ed ei mi disse: "Il foco etterno
ch'entro l'affoca le dimostra rosse,
come tu vedi in questo basso inferno."

So we arrived inside the deep-cut trenches
that are the moats of this despondent land:
the ramparts seemed to me to be of iron.
But not before we'd ranged in a wide circuit
did we approach a place where that shrill pilot
shouted: "Get out; the entrance way is here."
About the gates I saw more than a thousand—
who once had rained from Heaven—and they cried
in anger: "Who is this who, without death,
can journey through the kingdom of the dead?"
And my wise master made a sign that said
he wanted to speak secretly to them.
Then they suppressed—somewhat—their great disdain
and said: "You come alone; let him be gone—
for he was reckless, entering this realm.
Let him return alone on his mad road—
or try to, if he can, since you, his guide
across so dark a land, you are to stay."
Consider, reader, my dismay before
the sound of those abominable words:
returning here seemed so impossible.
"O my dear guide, who more than seven times
has given back to me my confidence
and snatched me from deep danger that had menaced,
do not desert me when I'm so undone;
and if they will not let us pass beyond,
let us retrace our steps together, quickly."
These were my words; the lord who'd led me there
replied: "Forget your fear, no one can hinder
our passage; One so great has granted it.
But you wait here for me, and feed and comfort
your tired spirit with good hope, for I
will not abandon you in this low world."
So he goes on his way; that gentle father
has left me there to wait and hesitate,
for yes and no contend within my head.
I could not hear what he was telling them;
but he had not been long with them when each
ran back into the city, scrambling fast.
And these, our adversaries, slammed the gates
in my lord's face; and he remained outside,
then, with slow steps, turned back again to me.

Noi pur giugnemmo dentro a l'alte fosse
che vallan quella terra sconsolata:
le mura mi parean che ferro fosse.
Non sanza prima far grande aggirata,
venimmo in parte dove il nocchier forte
"Usciteci," gridò: "qui è l'intrata."
Io vidi più di mille in su le porte
da ciel piovuti, che stizzosamente
dicean: "Chi è costui che sanza morte
va per lo regno de la morta gente?"
E 'l savio mio maestro fece segno
di voler lor parlar segretamente.
Allor chiusero un poco il gran disdegno
e disser: "Vien tu solo, e quei sen vada
che sì ardito intrò per questo regno.
Sol si ritorni per la folle strada:
pruovi, se sa; ché tu qui rimarrai,
che li ha' iscorta sì buia contrada."
Pensa, lettor, se io mi sconfortai
nel suon de le parole maladette,
ché non credetti ritornarci mai.
"O caro duca mio, che più di sette
volte m'hai sicurtà renduta e tratto
d'alto periglio che 'ncontra mi stette,
non mi lasciar," diss' io, "così disfatto;
e se 'l passar più oltre ci è negato,
ritroviam l'orme nostre insieme ratto."
E quel segnor che lì m'avea menato,
mi disse: "Non temer; ché 'l nostro passo
non ci può tòrre alcun: da tal n'è dato.
Ma qui m'attendi, e lo spirito lasso
conforta e ciba di speranza buona,
ch'i' non ti lascerò nel mondo basso."
Così sen va, e quivi m'abbandona
lo dolce padre, e io rimagno in forse,
che sì e no nel capo mi tenciona.
Udir non potti quello ch'a lor porse;
ma ei non stette là con essi guari,
che ciascun dentro a pruova si ricorse.
Chiuser le porte que' nostri avversari
nel petto al mio segnor, che fuor rimase
e rivolsesi a me con passi rari.

His eyes turned to the ground, his brows deprived
of every confidence, he said with sighs:
"See who has kept me from the house of sorrow!"
To me he added: "You—though I am vexed—
must not be daunted; I shall win this contest,
whoever tries—within—to block our way.
This insolence of theirs is nothing new;
they used it once before and at a gate
less secret—it is still without its bolts—
the place where you made out the fatal text;
and now, already well within that gate,
across the circles—and alone—descends
the one who will unlock this realm for us."

Li occhi a la terra e le ciglia avea rase
d'ogne baldanza, e dicea ne' sospiri:
"Chi m'ha negate le dolenti case!"
E a me disse: "Tu, perch' io m'adiri,
non sbigottir, ch'io vincerò la prova,
qual ch'a la difension dentro s'aggiri.
Questa lor tracotanza non è nova;
ché già l'usaro a men segreta porta,
la qual sanza serrame ancor si trova.
Sovr' essa vedestù la scritta morta:
e già di qua da lei discende l'erta,
passando per li cerchi sanza scorta,
tal che per lui ne fia la terra aperta."

CANTO IX

The color cowardice displayed in me
when I saw that my guide was driven back,
made him more quickly mask his own new pallor.
He stood alert, like an attentive listener,
because his eye could hardly journey far
across the black air and the heavy fog.
"We have to win this battle," he began,
"if not . . . But one so great had offered help.
How slow that someone's coming seems to me!"
But I saw well enough how he had covered
his first words with the words that followed after—
so different from what he had said before;
nevertheless, his speech made me afraid,
because I drew out from his broken phrase
a meaning worse—perhaps—than he'd intended.
"Does anyone from the first circle, one
whose only punishment is crippled hope,
ever descend so deep in this sad hollow?"
That was my question. And he answered so:
"It is quite rare for one of us to go
along the way that I have taken now.
But I, in truth, have been here once before:
that savage witch Erichton, she who called
the shades back to their bodies, summoned me.
My flesh had not been long stripped off when she
had me descend through all the rings of Hell,
to draw a spirit back from Judas' circle.
That is the deepest and the darkest place,
the farthest from the heaven that girds all:
so rest assured, I know the pathway well.
This swamp that breeds and breathes the giant stench
surrounds the city of the sorrowing,
which now we cannot enter without anger."

The gate of Dis. Dante's fear. The three Furies, invoking Medusa. Virgil's warning to Dante lest he look at Gorgon, Medusa's head. A heavenly messenger. The flight of the demons. Entry into Dis, where Virgil and Dante reach the Sixth Circle and its Arch-Heretics, entombed in red-hot sepulchers.

Quel color che viltà di fuor mi pinse
veggendo il duca mio tornare in volta,
più tosto dentro il suo novo ristrinse.
Attento si fermò com' uom ch'ascolta;
ché l'occhio nol potea menare a lunga
per l'aere nero e per la nebbia folta.
"Pur a noi converrà vincer la punga,"
cominciò el, "se non . . . Tal ne s'offerse.
Oh quanto tarda a me ch'altri qui giunga!"
I' vidi ben sì com' ei ricoperse
lo cominciar con l'altro che poi venne,
che fur parole a le prime diverse;
ma nondimen paura il suo dir dienne,
perch' io traeva la parola tronca
forse a peggior sentenzia che non tenne.
"In questo fondo de la trista conca
discende mai alcun del primo grado,
che sol per pena ha la speranza cionca?"
Questa question fec' io; e quei "Di rado
incontra," mi rispuose, "che di noi
faccia il cammino alcun per qual io vado.
Ver è ch'altra fiata qua giù fui,
congiurato da quella Eritón cruda
che richiamava l'ombre a' corpi sui.
Di poco era di me la carne nuda,
ch'ella mi fece intrar dentr' a quel muro,
per trarne un spirto del cerchio di Giuda.
Quell' è 'l più basso loco e 'l più oscuro,
e 'l più lontan dal ciel che tutto gira:
ben so 'l cammin; però ti fa sicuro.
Questa palude che 'l gran puzzo spira
cigne dintorno la città dolente,
u' non potemo intrare omai sanz' ira."

And he said more, but I cannot remember
because my eyes had wholly taken me
to that high tower with the glowing summit
where, at one single point, there suddenly
stood three infernal Furies flecked with blood,
who had the limbs of women and their ways
but wore, as girdles, snakes of deepest green;
small serpents and horned vipers formed their hairs,
and these were used to bind their bestial temples.
And he, who knew these handmaids well—they served
the Queen of never-ending lamentation—
said: "Look at the ferocious Erinyes!
That is Megaera on the left, and she
who weeps upon the right, that is Allecto;
Tisiphone's between them." He was done.
Each Fury tore her breast with taloned nails;
each, with her palms, beat on herself and wailed
so loud that I, in fear, drew near the poet.
"Just let Medusa come; then we shall turn
him into stone," they all cried, looking down;
" we should have punished Theseus' assault."
"Turn round and keep your eyes shut fast, for should
the Gorgon show herself and you behold her,
never again would you return above,"
my master said; and he himself turned me
around and, not content with just my hands,
used his as well to cover up my eyes.
O you possessed of sturdy intellects,
observe the teaching that is hidden here
beneath the veil of verses so obscure.
And now, across the turbid waves, there passed
a reboantic fracas—horrid sound,
enough to make both of the shorelines quake:
a sound not other than a wind's when, wild
because it must contend with warmer currents,
it strikes against the forest without let,
shattering, beating down, bearing off branches,
as it moves proudly, clouds of dust before it,
and puts to flight both animals and shepherds.
He freed my eyes and said: "Now let your optic
nerve turn directly toward that ancient foam,
there where the mist is thickest and most acrid."

E altro disse, ma non l'ho a mente;
però che l'occhio m'avea tutto tratto
ver' l'alta torre a la cima rovente,
dove in un punto furon dritte ratto
tre furïe infernal di sangue tinte,
che membra feminine avieno e atto,
e con idre verdissime eran cinte;
serpentelli e ceraste avien per crine,
onde le fiere tempie erano avvinte.
E quei, che ben conobbe le meschine
de la regina de l'etterno pianto,
"Guarda," mi disse, "le feroci Erine.
Quest' è Megera dal sinistro canto;
quella che piange dal destro è Aletto;
Tesifón è nel mezzo"; e tacque a tanto.
Con l'unghie si fendea ciascuna il petto;
battiensi a palme e gridavan sì alto,
ch'i' mi strinsi al poeta per sospetto.
"Vegna Medusa: sì 'l farem di smalto,"
dicevan tutte riguardando in giuso;
"mal non vengiammo in Tesëo l'assalto."
"Volgiti 'n dietro e tien lo viso chiuso;
ché se 'l Gorgón si mostra e tu 'l vedessi,
nulla sarebbe di tornar mai suso."
Così disse 'l maestro; ed elli stessi
mi volse, e non si tenne a le mie mani,
che con le sue ancor non mi chiudessi.
O voi ch'avete li 'ntelletti sani,
mirate la dottrina che s'asconde
sotto 'l velame de li versi strani.
E già venìa su per le torbide onde
un fracasso d'un suon, pien di spavento,
per cui tremavano amendue le sponde,
non altrimenti fatto che d'un vento
impetüoso per li avversi ardori,
che fier la selva e sanz' alcun rattento
li rami schianta, abbatte e porta fori;
dinanzi polveroso va superbo,
e fa fuggir le fiere e li pastori.
Li occhi mi sciolse e disse: "Or drizza il nerbo
del viso su per quella schiuma antica
per indi ove quel fummo è più acerbo."

As frogs confronted by their enemy,
the snake, will scatter underwater till
each hunches in a heap along the bottom,
so did the thousand ruined souls I saw
take flight before a figure crossing Styx
who walked as if on land and with dry soles.
He thrust away the thick air from his face,
waving his left hand frequently before him;
that seemed the only task that wearied him.
I knew well he was Heaven's messenger,
and I turned toward my master; and he made
a sign that I be still and bow before him.
How full of high disdain he seemed to me!
He came up to the gate, and with a wand,
he opened it, for there was no resistance.
"O you cast out of Heaven, hated crowd,"
were his first words upon that horrid threshold,
"why do you harbor this presumptuousness?
Why are you so reluctant to endure
that Will whose aim can never be cut short,
and which so often added to your hurts?
What good is it to thrust against the fates?
Your Cerberus, if you remember well,
for that, had both his throat and chin stripped clean."
At that he turned and took the filthy road,
and did not speak to us, but had the look
of one who is obsessed by other cares
than those that press and gnaw at those before him;
and we moved forward, on into the city,
in safety, having heard his holy words.
We made our way inside without a struggle;
and I, who wanted so much to observe
the state of things that such a fortress guarded,
as soon as I had entered, looked about.
I saw, on every side, a spreading plain
of lamentation and atrocious pain.
Just as at Arles, where Rhone becomes a marsh,
just as at Pola, near Quarnero's gulf,
that closes Italy and bathes its borders,
the sepulchers make all the plain uneven,
so they did here on every side, except
that here the sepulchers were much more harsh;

Come le rane innanzi a la nimica
biscia per l'acqua si dileguan tutte,
fin ch'a la terra ciascuna s'abbica,
vid' io più di mille anime distrutte
fuggir così dinanzi ad un ch'al passo
passava Stige con le piante asciutte.
Dal volto rimovea quell' aere grasso,
menando la sinistra innanzi spesso;
e sol di quell' angoscia parea lasso.
Ben m'accorsi ch'elli era da ciel messo,
e volsimi al maestro; e quei fé segno
ch'i' stessi queto ed inchinassi ad esso.
Ahi quanto mi parea pien di disdegno!
Venne a la porta e con una verghetta
l'aperse, che non v'ebbe alcun ritegno.
"O cacciati del ciel, gente dispetta,"
cominciò elli in su l'orribil soglia,
"ond' esta oltracotanza in voi s'alletta?
Perché recalcitrate a quella voglia
a cui non puote il fin mai esser mozzo,
e che più volte v'ha cresciuta doglia?
Che giova ne le fata dar di cozzo?
Cerbero vostro, se ben vi ricorda,
ne porta ancor pelato il mento e 'l gozzo."
Poi si rivolse per la strada lorda,
e non fé motto a noi, ma fé sembiante
d'omo cui altra cura stringa e morda
che quella di colui che li è davante;
e noi movemmo i piedi inver' la terra,
sicuri appresso le parole sante.
Dentro li 'ntrammo sanz' alcuna guerra;
e io, ch'avea di riguardar disio
la condizion che tal fortezza serra,
com' io fui dentro, l'occhio intorno invio:
e veggio ad ogne man grande campagna,
piena di duolo e di tormento rio.
Sì come ad Arli, ove Rodano stagna,
sì com' a Pola, presso del Carnaro
ch'Italia chiude e suoi termini bagna,
fanno i sepulcri tutt' il loco varo,
così facevan quivi d'ogne parte,
salvo che 'l modo v'era più amaro;

for flames were scattered through the tombs, and these
had kindled all of them to glowing heat;
no artisan could ask for hotter iron.
The lid of every tomb was lifted up,
and from each tomb such sorry cries arose
as could come only from the sad and hurt.
And I: "Master, who can these people be
who, buried in great chests of stone like these,
must speak by way of sighs in agony?"
And he to me: "Here are arch-heretics
and those who followed them, from every sect;
those tombs are much more crowded than you think.
Here, like has been ensepulchered with like;
some monuments are heated more, some less."
And then he turned around and to his right;
we passed between the torments and high walls.

ché tra li avelli fiamme erano sparte,
per le quali eran sì del tutto accesi,
che ferro più non chiede verun' arte.
Tutti li lor coperchi eran sospesi,
e fuor n'uscivan sì duri lamenti,
che ben parean di miseri e d'offesi.
E io: "Maestro, quai son quelle genti
che, seppellite dentro da quell' arche,
si fan sentir coi sospiri dolenti?"
E quelli a me: "Qui son li eresïarche
con lor seguaci, d'ogne setta, e molto
più che non credi son le tombe carche.
Simile qui con simile è sepolto,
e i monimenti son più e men caldi."
E poi ch'a la man destra si fu vòlto,
passammo tra i martìri e li alti spaldi.



XII · 4



TISIPHONE

CANTO X

Now, by a narrow path that ran between
those torments and the ramparts of the city,
my master moves ahead, I following.
"O highest virtue, you who lead me through
these circles of transgression, at your will,
do speak to me, and satisfy my longings.
Can those who lie within the sepulchers
be seen? The lids—in fact—have all been lifted;
no guardian is watching over them."
And he to me: "They'll all be shuttered up
when they return here from Jehosaphat
together with the flesh they left above.
Within this region is the cemetery
of Epicurus and his followers,
all those who say the soul dies with the body.
And so the question you have asked of me
will soon find satisfaction while we're here,
as will the longing you have hid from me."
And I: "Good guide, the only reason I
have hid my heart was that I might speak briefly,
and you, long since, encouraged me in this."
"O Tuscan, you who pass alive across
the fiery city with such seemly words,
be kind enough to stay your journey here.
Your accent makes it clear that you belong
among the natives of the noble city
I may have dealt with too vindictively."
This sound had burst so unexpectedly
out of one sepulcher that, trembling, I
then drew a little closer to my guide.
But he told me: "Turn round! What are you doing?
That's Farinata who has risen there—
you will see all of him from the waist up."

Still the Sixth Circle: the Heretics. The tombs of the Epicureans. Farinata degli Uberti. Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti. Farinata's prediction of Dante's difficulty in returning to Florence from exile. The inability of the damned to see the present, although they can foresee the future.

Ora sen va per un secreto calle,
tra 'l muro de la terra e li martìri,
lo mio maestro, e io dopo le spalle.
"O virtù somma, che per li empi giri
mi volvi," cominciai, "com' a te piace,
parlami, e sodisfammi a' miei disiri.
La gente che per li sepolcri giace
potrebbesi veder? già son levati
tutt' i coperchi, e nessun guardia face."
E quelli a me: "Tutti saran serrati
quando di Iosafàt qui torneranno
coi corpi che là sù hanno lasciati.
Suo cimitero da questa parte hanno
con Epicuro tutti suoi seguaci,
che l'anima col corpo morta fanno.
Però a la dimanda che mi faci
quinc' entro satisfatto sarà tosto,
e al disio ancor che tu mi taci."
E io: "Buon duca, non tegno riposto
a te mio cuor se non per dicer poco,
e tu m'hai non pur mo a ciò disposto."
"O Tosco che per la città del foco
vivo ten vai così parlando onesto,
piacciati di restare in questo loco.
La tua loquela ti fa manifesto
di quella nobil patrïa natio,
a la qual forse fui troppo molesto."
Subitamente questo suono uscìo
d'una de l'arche; però m'accostai,
temendo, un poco più al duca mio.
Ed el mi disse: "Volgiti! Che fai?
Vedi là Farinata che s'è dritto:
da la cintola in sù tutto 'l vedrai."

My eyes already were intent on his;
and up he rose—his forehead and his chest—
as if he had tremendous scorn for Hell.
My guide—his hands encouraging and quick—
thrust me between the sepulchers toward him,
saying: "Your words must be appropriate."
When I'd drawn closer to his sepulcher,
he glanced at me, and as if in disdain,
he asked of me: "Who were your ancestors?"
Because I wanted so to be compliant,
I hid no thing from him: I told him all.
At this he lifted up his brows a bit,
then said: "They were ferocious enemies
of mine and of my parents and my party,
so that I had to scatter them twice over."
"If they were driven out," I answered him,
"they still returned, both times, from every quarter;
but yours were never quick to learn that art."
At this there rose another shade alongside,
uncovered to my sight down to his chin;
I think that he had risen on his knees.
He looked around me, just as if he longed
to see if I had come with someone else;
but then, his expectation spent, he said
in tears: "If it is your high intellect
that lets you journey here, through this blind prison,
where is my son? Why is he not with you?"
I answered: "My own powers have not brought me;
he who awaits me there, leads me through here
perhaps to one your Guido did disdain."
His words, the nature of his punishment—
these had already let me read his name;
therefore, my answer was so fully made.
Then suddenly erect, he cried: "What's that:
He '*did* disdain'? He is not still alive?
The sweet light does not strike against his eyes?"
And when he noticed how I hesitated
a moment in my answer, he fell back—
supine—and did not show himself again.
But that great-hearted one, the other shade
at whose request I'd stayed, did not change aspect
or turn aside his head or lean or bend;

Io avea già il mio viso nel suo fitto;
ed el s'ergea col petto e con la fronte
com' avesse l'inferno a gran dispitto.
E l'animose man del duca e pronte
mi pinser tra le sepulture a lui,
dicendo: "Le parole tue sien conte."
Com' io al piè de la sua tomba fui,
guardommi un poco, e poi, quasi sdegnoso,
mi dimandò: "Chi fuor li maggior tui?"
Io ch'era d'ubidir disideroso,
non gliel celai, ma tutto gliel' apersi;
ond' ei levò le ciglia un poco in suso;
poi disse: "Fieramente furo avversi
a me e a miei primi e a mia parte,
sì che per due fïate li dispersi."
"S'ei fur cacciati, ei tornar d'ogne parte,"
rispuos' io lui, "l'una e l'altra fïata;
ma i vostri non appreser ben quell' arte."
Allor surse a la viste scoperchiata
un'ombra, lungo questa, infino al mento:
credo che s'era in ginocchie levata.
Dintorno mi guardò, come talento
avesse di veder s'altri era meco;
e poi che 'l sospecciar fu tutto spento,
piangendo disse: "Se per questo cieco
carcere vai per altezza d'ingegno,
mio figlio ov' è? e perché non è teco?"
E io a lui: "Da me stesso non vegno:
colui ch'attende là per qui mi mena
forse cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno."
Le sue parole e 'l modo de la pena
m'avean di costui già letto il nome;
però fu la risposta così piena.
Di sùbito drizzato gridò: "Come?
dicesti 'elli ebbe'? non viv' elli ancora?
non fiere li occhi suoi lo dolce lume?"
Quando s'accorse d'alcuna dimora
ch'io facëa dinanzi a la risposta,
supin ricadde e più non parve fora.
Ma quell' altro magnanimo, a cui posta
restato m'era, non mutò aspetto,
né mosse collo, né piegò sua costa;

and taking up his words where he'd left off,
"If they were slow," he said, "to learn that art,
that is more torment to me than this bed.
And yet the Lady who is ruler here
will not have her face kindled fifty times
before you learn how heavy is that art.
And so may you return to the sweet world,
tell me: why are those citizens so cruel
against my kin in all of their decrees?"
To which I said: "The carnage, the great bloodshed
that stained the waters of the Arbia red
have led us to such prayers in our temple."
He sighed and shook his head, then said: "In that,
I did not act alone, but certainly
I'd not have joined the others without cause.
But where I was alone was *there* where all
the rest would have annihilated Florence,
had I not interceded forcefully."
"Ah, as I hope your seed may yet find peace,"
I asked, "so may you help me to undo
the knot that here has snarled my course of thought.
It seems, if I hear right, that you can see
beforehand that which time is carrying,
but you're denied the sight of present things."
"We see, even as men who are farsighted,
those things," he said, "that are remote from us;
the Highest Lord allots us that much light.
But when events draw near or are, our minds
are useless; were we not informed by others,
we should know nothing of your human state.
So you can understand how our awareness
will die completely at the moment when
the portal of the future has been shut."
Then, as if penitent for my omission,
I said: "Will you now tell that fallen man
his son is still among the living ones;
and if, a while ago, I held my tongue
before his question, let him know it was
because I had in mind the doubt you've answered."
And now my master was recalling me;
so that, more hurriedly, I asked the spirit
to name the others who were there with him.

e sé continüando al primo detto,
"S'elli han quell' arte," disse, "male appresa,
ciò mi tormenta più che questo letto.
Ma non cinquanta volte fia raccesa
la faccia de la donna che qui regge,
che tu saprai quanto quell' arte pesa.
E se tu mai nel dolce mondo regge,
dimmi: perché quel popolo è sì empio
incontr' a' miei in ciascuna sua legge?"
Ond' io a lui: "Lo strazio e 'l grande scempio
che fece l'Arbia colorata in rosso,
tal orazion fa far nel nostro tempio."
Poi ch'ebbe sospirando il capo mosso,
"A ciò non fu' io sol," disse, "né certo
sanza cagion con li altri sarei mosso.
Ma fu' io solo, là dove sofferto
fu per ciascun di tòrre via Fiorenza,
colui che la difesi a viso aperto."
"Deh, se riposi mai vostra semenza,"
prega' io lui, "solvetemi quel nodo
che qui ha 'nviluppata mia sentenza.
El par che voi veggiate, se ben odo,
dinanzi quel che 'l tempo seco adduce,
e nel presente tenete altro modo."
"Noi veggiam, come quei c'ha mala luce,
le cose," disse, "che ne son lontano;
cotanto ancor ne splende il sommo duce.
Quando s'appressano o son, tutto è vano
nostro intelletto; e s'altri non ci apporta,
nulla sapem di vostro stato umano.
Però comprender puoi che tutta morta
fia nostra conoscenza da quel punto
che del futuro fia chiusa la porta."
Allor, come di mia colpa compunto,
dissi: "Or direte dunque a quel caduto
che 'l suo nato è co' vivi ancor congiunto;
e s'i' fui, dianzi, a la risposta muto,
fate i saper che 'l fei perché pensava
già ne l'error che m'avete soluto."
E già 'l maestro mio mi richiamava;
per ch'i' pregai lo spirto più avaccio
che mi dicesse chi con lu' istava.

He said: "More than a thousand lie with me:
the second Frederick is but one among them,
as is the Cardinal; I name no others."
With that, he hid himself; and pondering
the speech that seemed to me so menacing,
I turned my steps to meet the ancient poet.
He moved ahead, and as we made our way,
he said to me: "Why are you so dismayed?"
I satisfied him, answering him fully.
And then that sage exhorted me: "Remember
the words that have been spoken here against you.
Now pay attention," and he raised his finger;
"when you shall stand before the gentle splendor
of one whose gracious eyes see everything,
then you shall learn—from her—your lifetime's journey."
Following that, his steps turned to the left,
leaving the wall and moving toward the middle
along a path that strikes into a valley
whose stench, as it rose up, disgusted us.

Dissemi: "Qui con più di mille giaccio:
qua dentro è 'l secondo Federico
e 'l Cardinale; e de li altri mi taccio."
Indi s'ascose; e io inver' l'antico
poeta volsi i passi, ripensando
a quel parlar che mi parea nemico.
Elli si mosse; e poi, così andando,
mi disse: "Perché se' tu sì smarrito?"
E io li sodisfeci al suo dimando.
"La mente tua conservi quel ch'udito
hai contra te," mi comandò quel saggio;
"e ora attendi qui," e drizzò 'l dito:
"quando sarai dinanzi al dolce raggio
di quella il cui bell' occhio tutto vede,
da lei saprai di tua vita il vïaggio."
Appresso mosse a man sinistra il piede:
lasciammo il muro e gimmo inver' lo mezzo
per un sentier ch'a una valle fiede,
che 'nfin là sù facea spiacer suo lezzo.

CANTO XI

Along the upper rim of a high bank
formed by a ring of massive broken boulders,
we came above a crowd more cruelly pent.
And here, because of the outrageous stench
thrown up in excess by that deep abyss,
we drew back till we were behind the lid
of a great tomb, on which I made out this,
inscribed: "I hold Pope Anastasius,
enticed to leave the true path by Photinus."
"It would be better to delay descent
so that our senses may grow somewhat used
to this foul stench; and then we can ignore it."
So said my master, and I answered him:
"Do find some compensation, lest this time
be lost." And he: "You see, I've thought of that."
"My son, within this ring of broken rocks,"
he then began, "there are three smaller circles;
like those that you are leaving, they range down.
Those circles are all full of cursed spirits;
so that your seeing of them may suffice,
learn now the how and why of their confinement.
Of every malice that earns hate in Heaven,
injustice is the end; and each such end
by force or fraud brings harm to other men.
However, fraud is man's peculiar vice;
God finds it more displeasing—and therefore,
the fraudulent are lower, suffering more.
The violent take all of the first circle;
but since one uses force against three persons,
that circle's built of three divided rings.
To God and to one's self and to one's neighbor—
I mean, to them or what is theirs—one can
do violence, as you shall now hear clearly.

Still the Sixth Circle. Pope Anastasius' tomb. Virgil on the parts of Dis they now will visit, where the modes of malice are punished: violence in the Seventh Circle's Three Rings; "ordinary" fraud in the Eighth Circle; and treacherous fraud in the Ninth Circle. Hell's previous circles, Two through Five, as circles of incontinence. Usury condemned.

In su l'estremità d'un'alta ripa
che facevan gran pietre rotte in cerchio,
venimmo sopra più crudele stipa;
  e quivi, per l'orribile soperchio
del puzzo che 'l profondo abisso gitta,
ci raccostammo, in dietro, ad un coperchio
  d'un grand' avello, ov' io vidi una scritta
che dicea: "Anastasio papa guardo,
lo qual trasse Fotin de la via dritta."
  "Lo nostro scender conviene esser tardo,
sì che s'ausi un poco in prima il senso
al tristo fiato; e poi no i fia riguardo."
  Così 'l maestro; e io "Alcun compenso,"
dissi lui, "trova che 'l tempo non passi
perduto." Ed elli: "Vedi ch'a ciò penso."
  "Figliuol mio, dentro da cotesti sassi,"
cominciò poi a dir, "son tre cerchietti
di grado in grado, come que' che lassi.
  Tutti son pien di spirti maladetti;
ma perché poi ti basti pur la vista,
intendi come e perché son costretti.
  D'ogne malizia, ch'odio in cielo acquista,
ingiuria è 'l fine, ed ogne fin cotale
o con forza o con frode altrui contrista.
  Ma perché frode è de l'uom proprio male,
più spiace a Dio; e però stan di sotto
li frodolenti, e più dolor li assale.
  Di vïolenti il primo cerchio è tutto;
ma perché si fa forza a tre persone,
in tre gironi è distinto e costrutto.
  A Dio, a sé, al prossimo si pòne
far forza, dico in loro e in lor cose,
come udirai con aperta ragione.

Violent death and painful wounds may be
inflicted on one's neighbor; his possessions
may suffer ruin, fire, and extortion;
thus, murderers and those who strike in malice,
as well as plunderers and robbers—these,
in separated ranks, the first ring racks.
A man can set violent hands against
himself or his belongings; so within
the second ring repents, though uselessly,
whoever would deny himself your world,
gambling away, wasting his patrimony,
and weeping where he should instead be happy.
One can be violent against the Godhead,
one's heart denying and blaspheming Him
and scorning nature and the good in her;
so, with its sign, the smallest ring has sealed
both Sodom and Cahors and all of those
who speak in passionate contempt of God.
Now fraud, that eats away at every conscience,
is practiced by a man against another
who trusts in him, or one who has no trust.
This latter way seems only to cut off
the bond of love that nature forges; thus,
nestled within the second circle are:
hypocrisy and flattery, sorcerers,
and falsifiers, simony, and theft,
and barrators and panders and like trash.
But in the former way of fraud, not only
the love that nature forges is forgotten,
but added love that builds a special trust;
thus, in the tightest circle, where there is
the universe's center, seat of Dis,
all traitors are consumed eternally."
"Master, your reasoning is clear indeed,"
I said; "it has made plain for me the nature
of this pit and the population in it.
But tell me: those the dense marsh holds, or those
driven before the wind, or those on whom
rain falls, or those who clash with such harsh tongues,
why are they not all punished in the city
of flaming red if God is angry with them?
And if He's not, why then are they tormented?"

Morte per forza e ferute dogliose
nel prossimo si danno, e nel suo avere
ruine, incendi e tollette dannose;
onde omicide e ciascun che mal fiere,
guastatori e predon, tutti tormenta
lo giron primo per diverse schiere.
Puote omo aver in sé man vïolenta
e ne' suoi beni; e però nel secondo
giron convien che sanza pro si penta
qualunque priva sé del vostro mondo,
biscazza e fonde la sua facultade,
e piange là dov' esser de' giocondo.
Puossi far forza ne la deïtade,
col cor negando e bestemmiando quella,
e spregiando natura e sua bontade;
e però lo minor giron suggella
del segno suo e Soddoma e Caorsa
e chi, spregiando Dio col cor, favella.
La frode, ond' ogne coscïenza è morsa,
pùo l'omo usare in colui che 'n lui fida
e in quel che fidanza non imborsa.
Questo modo di retro par ch'incida
pur lo vinco d'amor che fa natura;
onde nel cerchio secondo s'annida
ipocresia, lusinghe e chi affattura,
falsità, ladroneccio e simonia,
ruffian, baratti e simile lordura.
Per l'altro modo quell' amor s'oblia
che fa natura, e quel ch'è poi aggiunto,
di che la fede spezïal si cria;
onde nel cerchio minore, ov' è 'l punto
de l'universo in su che Dite siede,
qualunque trade in etterno è consunto."
E io: "Maestro, assai chiara procede
la tua ragione, e assai ben distingue
questo baràtro e 'l popol ch'e' possiede.
Ma dimmi: quei de la palude pingue,
che mena il vento, e che batte la pioggia,
e che s'incontran con sì aspre lingue,
perché non dentro da la città roggia
sono ei puniti, se Dio li ha in ira?
e se non li ha, perché sono a tal foggia?"

And then to me, "Why does your reason wander
so far from its accustomed course?" he said.
"Or of what other things are you now thinking?
Have you forgotten, then, the words with which
your *Ethics* treats of those three dispositions
that strike at Heaven's will: incontinence
and malice and mad bestiality?
And how the fault that is the least condemned
and least offends God is incontinence?
If you consider carefully this judgment
and call to mind the souls of upper Hell,
who bear their penalties outside this city,
you'll see why they have been set off from these
unrighteous ones, and why, when heaven's vengeance
hammers at them, it carries lesser anger."
"O sun that heals all sight that is perplexed,
when I ask you, your answer so contents
that doubting pleases me as much as knowing.
Go back a little to that point," I said,
"where you told me that usury offends
divine goodness; unravel now that knot."
"Philosophy, for one who understands,
points out, and not in just one place," he said,
"how nature follows—as she takes her course—
the Divine Intellect and Divine Art;
and if you read your *Physics* carefully,
not many pages from the start, you'll see
that when it can, your art would follow nature,
just as a pupil imitates his master;
so that your art is almost God's grandchild.
From these two, art and nature, it is fitting,
if you recall how *Genesis* begins,
for men to make their way, to gain their living;
and since the usurer prefers another
pathway, he scorns both nature in herself
and art, her follower; his hope is elsewhere.
But follow me, for it is time to move;
the Fishes glitter now on the horizon
and all the Wain is spread out over Caurus;
only beyond, can one climb down the cliff."

Ed elli a me "Perché tanto delira,"
disse, "lo 'ngegno tuo da quel che sòle?
o ver la mente dove altrove mira?
Non ti rimembra di quelle parole
con le quai la tua Etica pertratta
le tre disposizion che 'l ciel non vole,
incontenenza, malizia e la matta
bestialitade? e come incontenenza
men Dio offende e men biasimo accatta?
Se tu riguardi ben questa sentenza,
e rechiti a la mente chi son quelli
che sù di fuor sostegnon penitenza,
tu vedrai ben perché da questi felli
sien dipartiti, e perché men crucciata
la divina vendetta li martelli."
"O sol che sani ogne vista turbata,
tu mi contenti sì quando tu solvi,
che, non men che saver, dubbiar m'aggrata.
Ancora in dietro un poco ti rivolvi,"
diss' io, "là dove di' ch'usura offende
la divina bontade, e 'l groppo solvi."
"Filosofia," mi disse, "a chi la 'ntende,
nota, non pure in una sola parte,
come natura lo suo corso prende
dal divino 'ntelletto e da sua arte;
e se tu ben la tua Fisica note,
tu troverai, non dopo molte carte,
che l'arte vostra quella, quanto pote,
segue, come 'l maestro fa 'l discente;
sì che vostr' arte a Dio quasi è nepote.
Da queste due, se tu ti rechi a mente
lo Genesì dal principio, convene
prender sua vita e avanzar la gente;
e perché l'usuriere altra via tene,
per sé natura e per la sua seguace
dispregia, poi ch'in altro pon la spene.
Ma seguimi oramai che 'l gir mi piace;
ché i Pesci guizzan su per l'orizzonta,
e 'l Carro tutto sovra 'l Coro giace,
e 'l balzo via là oltra si dismonta."

X·32





XII·12

XII·63

CANTO XII

The place that we had reached for our descent
along the bank was alpine; what reclined
upon that bank would, too, repel all eyes.
  Just like the toppled mass of rock that struck—
because of earthquake or eroded props—
the Adige on its flank, this side of Trent,
  where from the mountain top from which it thrust
down to the plain, the rock is shattered so
that it permits a path for those above:
  such was the passage down to that ravine.
And at the edge above the cracked abyss,
there lay outstretched the infamy of Crete,
  conceived within the counterfeited cow;
and, catching sight of us, he bit himself
like one whom fury devastates within.
  Turning to him, my sage cried out: "Perhaps
you think this is the Duke of Athens here,
who, in the world above, brought you your death.
  Be off, you beast; this man who comes has not
been tutored by your sister; all he wants
in coming here is to observe your torments."
  Just as the bull that breaks loose from its halter
the moment it receives the fatal stroke,
and cannot run but plunges back and forth,
  so did I see the Minotaur respond;
and my alert guide cried: "Run toward the pass;
it's better to descend while he's berserk."
  And so we made our way across that heap
of stones, which often moved beneath my feet
because my weight was somewhat strange for them.
  While climbing down, I thought. He said: "You wonder,
perhaps, about that fallen mass, watched over
by the inhuman rage I have just quenched.

The Seventh Circle, First Ring: the Violent against their Neighbors. The Minotaur. The Centaurs, led by Chiron, who assigns Nessus to guide Dante and Virgil across the boiling river of blood (Phlegethon). In that river, Tyrants and Murderers, immersed, watched over by the Centaurs.

Era lo loco ov' a scender la riva
venimmo, alpestro e, per quel che v'er' anco,
tal, ch'ogne vista ne sarebbe schiva.
Qual è quella ruina che nel fianco
di qua da Trento l'Adice percosse,
o per tremoto o per sostegno manco,
che da cima del monte, onde si mosse,
al piano è sì la roccia discoscesa,
ch'alcuna via darebbe a chi sù fosse:
cotal di quel burrato era la scesa;
e 'n su la punta de la rotta lacca
l'infamïa di Creti era distesa
che fu concetta ne la falsa vacca;
e quando vide noi, sé stesso morse,
sì come quei cui l'ira dentro fiacca.
Lo savio mio inver' lui gridò: "Forse
tu credi che qui sia 'l duca d'Atene,
che sù nel mondo la morte ti porse?
Pàrtiti, bestia, ché questi non vene
ammaestrato da la tua sorella,
ma vassi per veder le vostre pene."
Qual è quel toro che si slaccia in quella
c'ha ricevuto già 'l colpo mortale,
che gir non sa, ma qua e là saltella,
vid' io lo Minotauro far cotale;
e quello accorto gridò: "Corri al varco;
mentre ch'e' 'nfuria, è buon che tu ti cale."
Così prendemmo via giù per lo scarco
di quelle pietre, che spesso moviensi
sotto i miei piedi per lo novo carco.
Io gia pensando; e quei disse: "Tu pensi
forse a questa ruina, ch'è guardata
da quell' ira bestial ch'i' ora spensi.

Now I would have you know: the other time
that I descended into lower Hell,
this mass of boulders had not yet collapsed;
but if I reason rightly, it was just
before the coming of the One who took
from Dis the highest circle's splendid spoils
that, on all sides, the steep and filthy valley
had trembled so, I thought the universe
felt love (by which, as some believe, the world
has often been converted into chaos);
and at that moment, here as well as elsewhere,
these ancient boulders toppled, in this way.
But fix your eyes below, upon the valley,
for now we near the stream of blood, where those
who injure others violently, boil."
O blind cupidity and insane anger,
which goad us on so much in our short life,
then steep us in such grief eternally!
I saw a broad ditch bent into an arc
so that it could embrace all of that plain,
precisely as my guide had said before;
between it and the base of the embankment
raced files of Centaurs who were armed with arrows,
as, in the world above, they used to hunt.
On seeing us descend, they all reined in;
and, after they had chosen bows and shafts,
three of their number moved out from their ranks;
and still far off, one cried: "What punishment
do you approach as you descend the slope?
But speak from there; if not, I draw my bow."
My master told him: "We shall make reply
only to Chiron, when we reach his side;
your hasty will has never served you well."
Then he nudged me and said: "That one is Nessus,
who died because of lovely Deianira
and of himself wrought vengeance for himself.
And in the middle, gazing at his chest,
is mighty Chiron, tutor of Achilles;
the third is Pholus, he who was so frenzied.
And many thousands wheel around the moat,
their arrows aimed at any soul that thrusts
above the blood more than its guilt allots."

Or vo' che sappi che l'altra fïata
ch'i' discesi qua giù nel basso inferno,
questa roccia non era ancor cascata.
Ma certo poco pria, se ben discerno,
che venisse colui che la gran preda
levò a Dite del cerchio superno,
da tutte parti l'alta valle feda
tremò sì, ch'i' pensai che l'universo
sentisse amor, per lo qual è chi creda
più volte il mondo in caòsso converso;
e in quel punto questa vecchia roccia,
qui e altrove, tal fece riverso.
Ma ficca li occhi a valle, ché s'approccia
la riviera del sangue in la qual bolle
qual che per vïolenza in altrui noccia."
Oh cieca cupidigia e ira folle,
che sì ci sproni ne la vita corta,
e ne l'etterna poi sì mal c'immolle!
Io vidi un'ampia fossa in arco torta,
come quella che tutto 'l piano abbraccia,
secondo ch'avea detto la mia scorta;
e tra 'l piè de la ripa ed essa, in traccia
corrien centauri, armati di saette,
come solien nel mondo andare a caccia.
Veggendoci calar, ciascun ristette,
e de la schiera tre si dipartiro
con archi e asticciuole prima elette;
e l'un gridò da lungi: "A qual martiro
venite voi che scendete la costa?
Ditel costinci; se non, l'arco tiro."
Lo mio maestro disse: "La risposta
farem noi a Chirón costà di presso:
mal fu la voglia tua sempre sì tosta."
Poi mi tentò, e disse: "Quelli è Nesso,
che morì per la bella Deianira,
e fé di sé la vendetta elli stesso.
E quel di mezzo, ch'al petto si mira,
è il gran Chirón, il qual nodrì Achille;
quell' altro è Folo, che fu sì pien d'ira.
Dintorno al fosso vanno a mille a mille,
saettando qual anima si svelle
del sangue più che sua colpa sortille."

By now we had drawn near those agile beasts;
Chiron drew out an arrow; with the notch,
he parted his beard back upon his jaws.
When he'd uncovered his enormous mouth,
he said to his companions: "Have you noticed
how he who walks behind moves what he touches?
Dead souls are not accustomed to do that."
And my good guide—now near the Centaur's chest,
the place where his two natures met—replied:
"He is indeed alive, and so alone
it falls to me to show him the dark valley.
Necessity has brought him here, not pleasure.
For she who gave me this new task was one
who had just come from singing halleluiah:
he is no robber; I am not a thief.
But by the Power that permits my steps
to journey on so wild a path, give us
one of your band, to serve as our companion;
and let him show us where to ford the ditch,
and let him bear this man upon his back,
for he's no spirit who can fly through air."
Then Chiron wheeled about and right and said
to Nessus: "Then, return and be their guide;
if other troops disturb you, fend them off."
Now, with our faithful escort, we advanced
along the bloodred, boiling ditch's banks,
beside the piercing cries of those who boiled.
I saw some who were sunk up to their brows,
and that huge Centaur said: "These are the tyrants
who plunged their hands in blood and plundering.
Here they lament their ruthless crimes; here are
both Alexander and the fierce Dionysius,
who brought such years of grief to Sicily.
That brow with hair so black is Ezzelino;
that other there, the blonde one, is Obizzo
of Este, he who was indeed undone,
within the world above, by his own stepson."
Then I turned to the poet, and he said:
"Now let him be your first guide, me your second."
A little farther on, the Centaur stopped
above a group that seemed to rise above
the boiling blood as far up as their throats.

Noi ci appressammo a quelle fiere isnelle:
Chirón prese uno strale, e con la cocca
fece la barba in dietro a le mascelle.
Quando s'ebbe scoperta la gran bocca,
disse a' compagni: "Siete voi accorti
che quel di retro move ciò ch'el tocca?
Così non soglion far li piè d'i morti."
E 'l mio buon duca, che già li er' al petto,
dove le due nature son consorti,
rispuose: "Ben è vivo, e sì soletto
mostrar li mi convien la valle buia;
necessità 'l ci 'nduce, e non diletto.
Tal si partì da cantare alleluia
che mi commise quest' officio novo:
non è ladron, né io anima fuia.
Ma per quella virtù per cu' io movo
li passi miei per sì selvaggia strada,
danne un de' tuoi, a cui noi siamo a provo,
e che ne mostri là dove si guada,
e che porti costui in su la groppa,
ché non è spirto che per l'aere vada."
Chirón si volse in su la destra poppa,
e disse a Nesso: "Torna, e sì li guida,
e fa cansar s'altra schiera v'intoppa."
Or ci movemmo con la scorta fida
lungo la proda del bollor vermiglio,
dove i bolliti facieno alte strida.
Io vidi gente sotto infino al ciglio;
e 'l gran centauro disse: "E' son tiranni
che dier nel sangue e ne l'aver di piglio.
Quivi si piangon li spietati danni;
quivi è Alessandro, e Dïonisio fero
che fé Cicilia aver dolorosi anni.
E quella fronte c'ha 'l pel così nero,
è Azzolino; e quell' altro ch'è biondo,
è Opizzo da Esti, il qual per vero
fu spento dal figliastro sù nel mondo."
Allor mi volsi al poeta, e quei disse:
"Questi ti sia or primo, e io secondo."
Poco più oltre il centauro s'affisse
sovr' una gente che 'nfino a la gola
parea che di quel bulicame uscisse.

He pointed out one shade, alone, apart,
and said: "Within God's bosom, he impaled
the heart that still drips blood upon the Thames."
Then I caught sight of some who kept their heads
and even their full chests above the tide;
among them—many whom I recognized.
And so the blood grew always shallower
until it only scorched the feet; and here
we found a place where we could ford the ditch.
"Just as you see that, on this side, the brook
continually thins," the Centaur said,
"so I should have you know the rivulet,
along the other side, will slowly deepen
its bed, until it reaches once again
the depth where tyranny must make lament.
And there divine justice torments Atilla,
he who was such a scourge upon the earth,
and Pyrrhus, Sextus; to eternity
it milks the tears that boiling brook unlocks
from Rinier of Corneto, Rinier Pazzo,
those two who waged such war upon the highroads."
Then he turned round and crossed the ford again.

Mostrocci un'ombra da l'un canto sola,
dicendo: "Colui fesse in grembo a Dio
lo cor che 'n su Tamisi ancor si cola."
Poi vidi gente che di fuor del rio
tenean la testa e ancor tutto 'l casso;
e di costoro assai riconobb' io.
Così a più a più si facea basso
quel sangue, sì che cocea pur li piedi;
e quindi fu del fosso il nostro passo.
"Sì come tu da questa parte vedi
lo bulicame che sempre si scema,"
disse 'l centauro, "voglio che tu credi
che da quest' altra a più a più giù prema
lo fondo suo, infin ch'el si raggiunge
ove la tirannia convien che gema.
La divina giustizia di qua punge
quell' Attila che fu flagello in terra,
e Pirro e Sesto; e in etterno munge
le lagrime, che col bollor diserra,
a Rinier da Corneto, a Rinier Pazzo,
che fecero a le strade tanta guerra."
Poi si rivolse e ripassossi 'l guazzo.

CANTO XIII

Nessus had not yet reached the other bank
when we began to make our way across
a wood on which no path had left its mark.
No green leaves in that forest, only black;
no branches straight and smooth, but knotted, gnarled;
no fruits were there, but briers bearing poison.
Even those savage beasts that roam between
Cécina and Corneto, beasts that hate
tilled lands, do not have holts so harsh and dense.
This is the nesting place of the foul Harpies,
who chased the Trojans from the Strophades
with sad foretelling of their future trials.
Their wings are wide, their necks and faces human;
their feet are taloned, their great bellies feathered;
they utter their laments on the strange trees.
And my kind master then instructed me:
"Before you enter farther know that now
you are within the second ring and shall
be here until you reach the horrid sand;
therefore look carefully; you'll see such things
as would deprive my speech of all belief."
From every side I heard the sound of cries,
but I could not see any source for them,
so that, in my bewilderment, I stopped.
I think that he was thinking that I thought
so many voices moaned among those trunks
from people who had been concealed from us.
Therefore my master said: "If you would tear
a little twig from any of these plants,
the thoughts you have will also be cut off."
Then I stretched out my hand a little way
and from a great thornbush snapped off a branch,
at which its trunk cried out: "Why do you tear me?"

The Seventh Circle, Second Ring: the Violent against Themselves (Suicides) or against their Possessions (Squanderers). The dreary wood, with the Suicides transformed into strange trees, and the Squanderers, hounded and rent by bitches. Pier della Vigna. Lano and Jacopo da Santo Andrea. The anonymous Florentine suicide.

Non era ancor di là Nesso arrivato,
quando noi ci mettemmo per un bosco
che da neun sentiero era segnato.
Non fronda verde, ma di color fosco;
non rami schietti, ma nodosi e 'nvolti;
non pomi v'eran, ma stecchi con tòsco.
Non han sì aspri sterpi né sì folti
quelle fiere selvagge che 'n odio hanno
tra Cecina e Corneto i luoghi cólti.
Quivi le brutte Arpie lor nidi fanno,
che cacciar de le Strofade i Troiani
con tristo annunzio di futuro danno.
Ali hanno late, e colli e visi umani,
piè con artigli, e pennuto 'l gran ventre;
fanno lamenti in su li alberi strani.
E 'l buon maestro "Prima che più entre,
sappi che se' nel secondo girone,"
mi cominciò a dire, "e sarai mentre
che tu verrai ne l'orribil sabbione.
Però riguarda ben; sì vederai
cose che torrien fede al mio sermone."
Io sentia d'ogne parte trarre guai
e non vedea persona che 'l facesse;
per ch'io tutto smarrito m'arrestai.
Cred' ïo ch'ei credette ch'io credesse
che tante voci uscisser, tra quei bronchi,
da gente che per noi si nascondesse.
Però disse 'l maestro: "Se tu tronchi
qualche fraschetta d'una d'este piante,
li pensier c'hai si faran tutti monchi."
Allor porsi la mano un poco avante
e colsi un ramicel da un gran pruno;
e 'l tronco suo gridò: "Perché mi schiante?"

And then, when it had grown more dark with blood,
it asked again: "Why do you break me off?
Are you without all sentiment of pity?
We once were men and now are arid stumps:
your hand might well have shown us greater mercy
had we been nothing more than souls of serpents."
As from a sapling log that catches fire
along one of its ends, while at the other
it drips and hisses with escaping vapor,
so from that broken stump issued together
both words and blood; at which I let the branch
fall, and I stood like one who is afraid.
My sage said: "Wounded soul, if, earlier,
he had been able to believe what he
had only glimpsed within my poetry,
then he would not have set his hand against you;
but its incredibility made me
urge him to do a deed that grieves me deeply.
But tell him who you were, so that he may,
to make amends, refresh your fame within
the world above, where he can still return."
To which the trunk: "Your sweet speech draws me so
that I cannot be still; and may it not
oppress you, if I linger now in talk.
I am the one who guarded both the keys
of Frederick's heart and turned them, locking and
unlocking them with such dexterity
that none but I could share his confidence;
and I was faithful to my splendid office,
so faithful that I lost both sleep and strength.
The whore who never turned her harlot's eyes
away from Caesar's dwelling, she who is
the death of all and vice of every court,
inflamed the minds of everyone against me;
and those inflamed, then so inflamed Augustus
that my delighted honors turned to sadness.
My mind, because of its disdainful temper,
believing it could flee disdain through death,
made me unjust against my own just self.
I swear to you by the peculiar roots
of this thornbush, I never broke my faith
with him who was so worthy—with my lord.

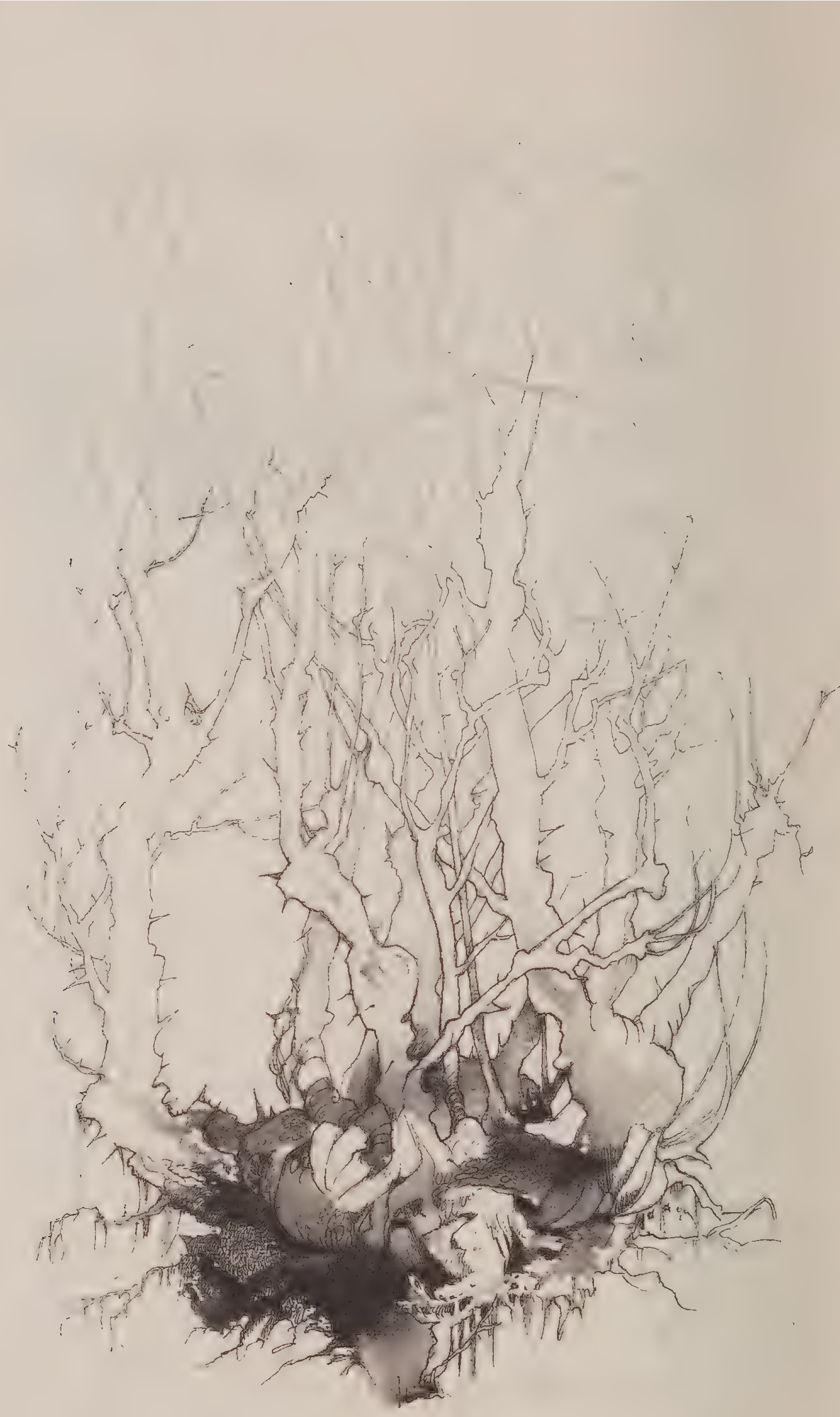
Da che fatto fu poi di sangue bruno,
ricominciò a dir: "Perché mi scerpi?
non hai tu spirto di pietade alcuno?
Uomini fummo, e or siam fatti sterpi:
ben dovrebb' esser la tua man più pia,
se state fossimo anime di serpi."
Come d'un stizzo verde ch'arso sia
da l'un de' capi, che da l'altro geme
e cigola per vento che va via,
sì de la scheggia rotta usciva insieme
parole e sangue; ond' io lasciai la cima
cadere, e stetti come l'uom che teme.
"S'elli avesse potuto creder prima,"
rispuose 'l savio mio, "anima lesa,
ciò c'ha veduto pur con la mia rima,
non averebbe in te la man distesa;
ma la cosa incredibile mi fece
indurlo ad ovra ch'a me stesso pesa.
Ma dilli chi tu fosti, sì che 'n vece
d'alcun' ammenda tua fama rinfreschi
nel mondo sù, dove tornar li lece."
E 'l tronco: "Sì col dolce dir m'adeschi,
ch'i' non posso tacere; e voi non gravi
perch' io un poco a ragionar m'inveschi.
Io son colui che tenni ambo le chiavi
del cor di Federigo, e che le volsi,
serrando e diserrando, sì soavi,
che dal secreto suo quasi ogn' uom tolsi;
fede portai al glorïoso offizio,
tanto ch'i' ne perde' li sonni e ' polsi.
La meretrice che mai da l'ospizio
di Cesare non torse li occhi putti,
morte comune e de le corti vizio,
infiammò contra me li animi tutti;
e li 'nfiammati infiammar sì Augusto,
che ' lieti onor tornaro in tristi lutti.
L'animo mio, per disdegnoso gusto,
credendo col morir fuggir disdegno,
ingiusto fece me contra me giusto.
Per le nove radici d'esto legno
vi giuro che già mai non ruppi fede
al mio segnor, che fu d'onor sì degno.

If one of you returns into the world,
then let him help my memory, which still
lies prone beneath the battering of envy."
The poet waited briefly, then he said
to me: "Since he is silent, do not lose
this chance, but speak and ask what you would know."
And I: "Do you continue; ask of him
whatever you believe I should request;
I cannot, so much pity takes my heart."
Then he began again: "Imprisoned spirit,
so may this man do freely what you ask,
may it please you to tell us something more
of how the soul is bound into these knots;
and tell us, if you can, if any one
can ever find his freedom from these limbs."
At this the trunk breathed violently, then
that wind became this voice: "You shall be answered
promptly. When the savage spirit quits
the body from which it has torn itself,
then Minos sends it to the seventh maw.
It falls into the wood, and there's no place
to which it is allotted, but wherever
fortune has flung that soul, that is the space
where, even as a grain of spelt, it sprouts.
It rises as a sapling, a wild plant;
and then the Harpies, feeding on its leaves,
cause pain and for that pain provide a vent.
Like other souls, we shall seek out the flesh
that we have left, but none of us shall wear it;
it is not right for any man to have
what he himself has cast aside. We'll drag
our bodies here; they'll hang in this sad wood,
each on the stump of its vindictive shade."
And we were still intent upon the trunk—
believing it had wanted to say more—
when we were overtaken by a roar,
just as the hunter is aware of chase
and boar as they draw near his post—he hears
the beasts and then the branches as they crack.
And there upon the left were two who, scratched
and naked, fled so violently that
they tore away each forest bough they passed.

E se di voi alcun nel mondo riede,
conforti la memoria mia, che giace
ancor del colpo che 'nvidia le diede."
Un poco attese, e poi "Da ch'el si tace,"
disse 'l poeta a me, "non perder l'ora;
ma parla, e chiedi a lui, se più ti piace."
Ond' ïo a lui: "Domandal tu ancora
di quel che credi ch'a me satisfaccia;
ch'i' non potrei, tanta pietà m'accora."
Perciò ricominciò: "Se l'om ti faccia
liberamente ciò che 'l tuo dir priega,
spirito incarcerato, ancor ti piaccia
di dirne come l'anima si lega
in questi nocchi; e dinne, se tu puoi,
s'alcuna mai di tai membra si spiega."
Allor soffiò il tronco forte, e poi
si convertì quel vento in cotal voce:
"Brievemente sarà risposto a voi.
Quando si parte l'anima feroce
dal corpo ond' ella stessa s'è disvelta,
Minòs la manda a la settima foce.
Cade in la selva, e non l'è parte scelta;
ma là dove fortuna la balestra,
quivi germoglia come gran di spelta.
Surge in vermena e in pianta silvestra:
l'Arpie, pascendo poi de le sue foglie,
fanno dolore, e al dolor fenestra.
Come l'altre verrem per nostre spoglie,
ma non però ch'alcuna sen rivesta,
ché non è giusto aver ciò ch'om si toglie.
Qui le strascineremo, e per la mesta
selva saranno i nostri corpi appesi,
ciascuno al prun de l'ombra sua molesta."
Noi eravamo ancora al tronco attesi,
credendo ch'altro ne volesse dire,
quando noi fummo d'un romor sorpresi,
similemente a colui che venire
sente 'l porco e la caccia a la sua posta,
ch'ode le bestie, e le frasche stormire.
Ed ecco due da la sinistra costa,
nudi e graffiati, fuggendo sì forte,
che de la selva rompieno ogne rosta.

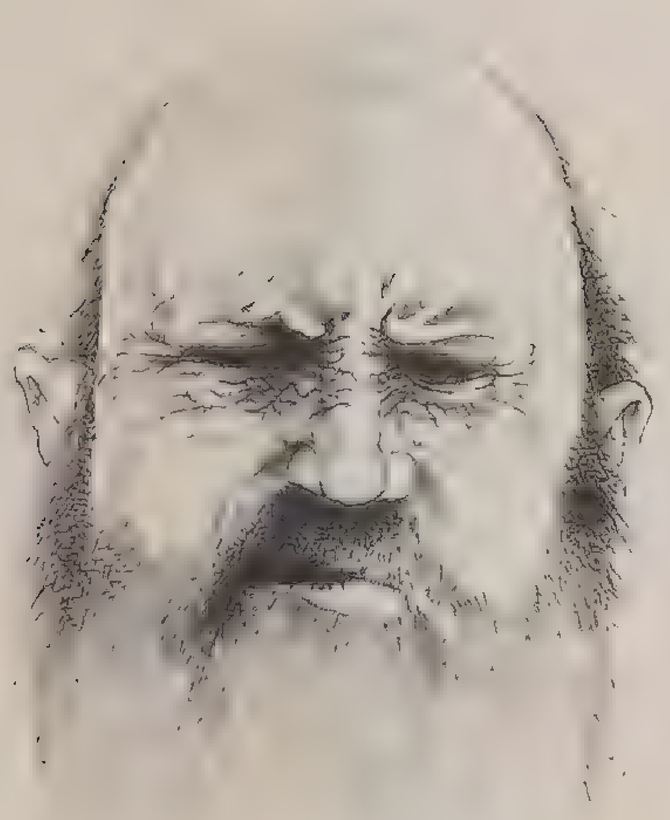
The one in front: "Now come, death, quickly come!"
The other shade, who thought himself too slow,
was shouting after him: "Lano, your legs
were not so nimble at the jousts of Toppo!"
And then, perhaps because he'd lost his breath,
he fell into one tangle with a bush.
Behind these two, black bitches filled the wood,
and they were just as eager and as swift
as greyhounds that have been let off their leash.
They set their teeth in him where he had crouched;
and, piece by piece, those dogs dismembered him
and carried off his miserable limbs.
Then he who was my escort took my hand;
he led me to the lacerated thorn
that wept in vain where it was bleeding, broken.
"O Jacopo," it said, "da Santo Andrea,
what have you gained by using me as screen?
Am I to blame for your indecent life?"
When my good master stood beside that bush,
he said: "Who were you, who through many wounds
must breathe with blood your melancholy words?"
And he to us: "O spirits who have come
to witness the outrageous laceration
that leaves so many of my branches torn,
collect them at the foot of this sad thorn.
My home was in the city whose first patron
gave way to John the Baptist; for this reason,
he'll always use his art to make it sorrow;
and if—along the crossing of the Arno—
some effigy of Mars had not remained,
those citizens who afterward rebuilt
their city on the ashes that Atilla
had left to them, would have travailed in vain.
I made—of my own house—my gallows place."

Quel dinanzi: "Or accorri, accorri, morte!"
E l'altro, cui pareva tardar troppo,
gridava: "Lano, sì non furo accorte
le gambe tue a le giostre dal Toppo!"
E poi che forse li fallia la lena,
di sé e d'un cespuglio fece un groppo.
Di rietro a loro era la selva piena
di nere cagne, bramose e correnti
come veltri ch'uscisser di catena.
In quel che s'appiattò miser li denti,
e quel dilaceraro a brano a brano;
poi sen portar quelle membra dolenti.
Presemi allor la mia scorta per mano,
e menommi al cespuglio che piangea
per le rotture sanguinenti in vano.
"O Iacopo," dicea, "da Santo Andrea,
che t'è giovato di me fare schermo?
che colpa ho io de la tua vita rea?"
Quando 'l maestro fu sovr' esso fermo,
disse: "Chi fosti, che per tante punte
soffi con sangue doloroso sermo?"
Ed elli a noi: "O anime che giunte
siete a veder lo strazio disonesto
c'ha le mie fronde sì da me disgiunte,
raccoglietele al piè del tristo cesto.
I' fui de la città che nel Batista
mutò 'l primo padrone; ond' ei per questo
sempre con l'arte sua la farà trista;
e se non fosse che 'n sul passo d'Arno
rimane ancor di lui alcuna vista,
que' cittadin che poi la rifondarno
sovra 'l cener che d'Attila rimase,
avrebber fatto lavorare indarno.
Io fei gibetto a me de le mie case."



XIII · 5

XV·18





XV·121

XIII·40



CANTO XIV

Love of our native city overcame me;
I gathered up the scattered boughs and gave
them back to him whose voice was spent already.
From there we reached the boundary that divides
the second from the third ring—and the sight
of a dread work that justice had devised.
To make these strange things clear, I must explain
that we had come upon an open plain
that banishes all green things from its bed.
The wood of sorrow is a garland round it,
just as that wood is ringed by a sad channel;
here, at the very edge, we stayed our steps.
The ground was made of sand, dry and compact,
a sand not different in kind from that
on which the feet of Cato had once tramped.
O vengeance of the Lord, how you should be
dreaded by everyone who now can read
whatever was made manifest to me!
I saw so many flocks of naked souls,
all weeping miserably, and it seemed
that they were ruled by different decrees.
Some lay upon the ground, flat on their backs;
some huddled in a crouch, and there they sat;
and others moved about incessantly.
The largest group was those who walked about,
the smallest, those supine in punishment;
but these had looser tongues to tell their torment.
Above that plain of sand, distended flakes
of fire showered down; their fall was slow—
as snow descends on alps when no wind blows.
Just like the flames that Alexander saw
in India's hot zones, when fires fell,
intact and to the ground, on his battalions,

The Seventh Circle, Third Ring: the Violent against God. The First Zone: Blasphemers, supine on fiery sands. Capaneus. Virgil on the Old Man of Crete, whose streaming tears form the rivers of Hell: Acheron, Phlegethon, Styx, and Cocytus. The sight of Lethe postponed.

Poi che la carità del natio loco
mi strinse, raunai le fronde sparte
e rende'le a colui, ch'era già fioco.
Indi venimmo al fine ove si parte
lo secondo giron dal terzo, e dove
si vede di giustizia orribil arte.
A ben manifestar le cose nove,
dico che arrivammo ad una landa
che dal suo letto ogne pianta rimove.
La dolorosa selva l'è ghirlanda
intorno, come 'l fosso tristo ad essa;
quivi fermammo i passi a randa a randa.
Lo spazzo era una rena arida e spessa,
non d'altra foggia fatta che colei
che fu da' piè di Caton già soppressa.
O vendetta di Dio, quanto tu dei
esser temuta da ciascun che legge
ciò che fu manifesto a li occhi mei!
D'anime nude vidi molte gregge
che piangean tutte assai miseramente,
e parea posta lor diversa legge.
Supin giacea in terra alcuna gente,
alcuna si sedea tutta raccolta,
e altra andava continüamente.
Quella che giva 'ntorno era più molta,
e quella men che giacëa al tormento,
ma più al duolo avea la lingua sciolta.
Sovra tutto 'l sabbion, d'un cader lento,
piovean di foco dilatate falde,
come di neve in alpe sanza vento.
Quali Alessandro in quelle parti calde
d'Indïa vide sopra 'l süo stuolo
fiamme cadere infino a terra salde,

for which—wisely—he had his soldiers tramp
the soil to see that every fire was spent
before new flames were added to the old;
so did the never-ending heat descend;
with this, the sand was kindled just as tinder
on meeting flint will flame—doubling the pain.
The dance of wretched hands was never done;
now here, now there, they tried to beat aside
the fresh flames as they fell. And I began
to speak: "My master, you who can defeat
all things except for those tenacious demons
who tried to block us at the entryway,
who is that giant there, who does not seem
to heed the singeing—he who lies and scorns
and scowls, he whom the rains can't seem to soften?"
And he himself, on noticing that I
was querying my guide about him, cried:
"That which I was in life, I am in death.
Though Jove wear out the smith from whom he took,
in wrath, the keen-edged thunderbolt with which
on my last day I was to be transfixed;
or if he tire the others, one by one,
in Mongibello, at the sooty forge,
while bellowing: 'O help, good Vulcan, help!'—
just as he did when there was war at Phlegra—
and casts his shafts at me with all his force,
not even then would he have happy vengeance."
Then did my guide speak with such vehemence
as I had never heard him use before:
"O Capaneus, for your arrogance
that is not quenched, you're punished all the more:
no torture other than your own madness
could offer pain enough to match your wrath."
But then, with gentler face he turned to me
and said: "That man was one of seven kings
besieging Thebes; he held—and still, it seems,
holds—God in great disdain, disprizing Him;
but as I told him now, his maledictions
sit well as ornaments upon his chest.
Now follow me and—take care—do not set
your feet upon the sand that's burning hot,
but always keep them back, close to the forest."

per ch'ei provide a scalpitar lo suolo
con le sue schiere, acciò che lo vapore
mei si stingueva mentre ch'era solo:
tale scendeva l'etternale ardore;
onde la rena s'accendea, com' esca
sotto focile, a doppiar lo dolore.
Sanza riposo mai era la tresca
de le misere mani, or quindi or quinci
escotendo da sé l'arsura fresca.
I' cominciai: "Maestro, tu che vinci
tutte le cose, fuor che ' demon duri
ch'a l'intrar de la porta incontra uscinci,
chi è quel grande che non par che curi
lo 'ncendio e giace dispettoso e torto,
sì che la pioggia non par che 'l maturi?"
E quel medesmo, che si fu accorto
ch'io domandava il mio duca di lui,
gridò: "Qual io fui vivo, tal son morto.
Se Giove stanchi 'l suo fabbro da cui
crucciato prese la folgore aguta
onde l'ultimo dì percosso fui;
o s'elli stanchi li altri a muta a muta
in Mongibello a la focina negra,
chiamando 'Buon Vulcano, aiuta, aiuta!'
sì com' el fece a la pugna di Flegra,
e me saetti con tutta sua forza:
non ne potrebbe aver vendetta allegra."
Allora il duca mio parlò di forza
tanto, ch'i' non l'avea sì forte udito:
"O Capaneo, in ciò che non s'ammorza
la tua superbia, se' tu più punito;
nullo martiro, fuor che la tua rabbia,
sarebbe al tuo furor dolor compito."
Poi si rivolse a me con miglior labbia,
dicendo: "Quei fu l'un d'i sette regi
ch'assiser Tebe; ed ebbe e par ch'elli abbia
Dio in disdegno, e poco par che 'l pregi;
ma, com' io dissi lui, li suoi dispetti
sono al suo petto assai debiti fregi.
Or mi vien dietro, e guarda che non metti,
ancor, li piedi ne la rena arsiccia;
ma sempre al bosco tien li piedi stretti."

In silence we had reached a place where flowed
a slender watercourse out of the wood—
a stream whose redness makes me shudder still.
As from the Bulicame pours a brook
whose waters then are shared by prostitutes,
so did this stream run down across the sand.
Its bed and both its banks were made of stone,
together with the slopes along its shores,
so that I saw our passageway lay there.
"Among all other things that I have shown you
since we first made our way across the gate
whose threshold is forbidden to no one,
no thing has yet been witnessed by your eyes
as notable as this red rivulet,
which quenches every flame that burns above it."
These words were spoken by my guide; at this,
I begged him to bestow the food for which
he had already given me the craving.
"A devastated land lies in midsea,
a land that is called Crete," he answered me.
"Under its king the world once lived chastely.
Within that land there was a mountain blessed
with leaves and waters, and they called it Ida;
but it is withered now like some old thing.
It once was chosen as a trusted cradle
by Rhea for her son; to hide him better,
when he cried out, she had her servants clamor.
Within the mountain is a huge Old Man,
who stands erect—his back turned toward Damietta—
and looks at Rome as if it were his mirror.
The Old Man's head is fashioned of fine gold,
the purest silver forms his arms and chest,
but he is made of brass down to the cleft;
below that point he is of choicest iron
except for his right foot, made of baked clay;
and he rests more on this than on the left.
Each part of him, except the gold, is cracked;
and down that fissure there are tears that drip;
when gathered, they pierce through that cavern's floor
and, crossing rocks into this valley, form
the Acheron and Styx and Phlegethon;
and then they make their way down this tight channel,

Tacendo divenimmo là 've spiccia
fuor de la selva un picciol fiumicello,
lo cui rossore ancor mi raccapriccia.
Quale del Bulicame esce ruscello
che parton poi tra lor le peccatrici,
tal per la rena giù sen giva quello.
Lo fondo suo e ambo le pendici
fatt' era 'n pietra, e ' margini da lato;
per ch'io m'accorsi che 'l passo era lici.
"Tra tutto l'altro ch'i' t'ho dimostrato,
poscia che noi intrammo per la porta
lo cui sogliare a nessuno è negato,
cosa non fu da li tuoi occhi scorta
notabile com' è 'l presente rio,
che sovra sé tutte fiammelle ammorta."
Queste parole fuor del duca mio;
per ch'io 'l pregai che mi largisse 'l pasto
di cui largito m'avëa il disio.
"In mezzo mar siede un paese guasto,"
diss' elli allora, "che s'appella Creta,
sotto 'l cui rege fu già 'l mondo casto.
Una montagna v'è che già fu lieta
d'acqua e di fronde, che si chiamò Ida;
or è diserta come cosa vieta.
Rëa la scelse già per cuna fida
del suo figliuolo, e per celarlo meglio,
quando piangea, vi facea far le grida.
Dentro dal monte sta dritto un gran veglio,
che tien volte le spalle inver' Dammiata
e Roma guarda come süo speglio.
La sua testa è di fin oro formata,
e puro argento son le braccia e 'l petto,
poi è di rame infino a la forcata;
da indi in giuso è tutto ferro eletto,
salvo che 'l destro piede è terra cotta;
e sta 'n su quel, più che 'n su l'altro, eretto.
Ciascuna parte, fuor che l'oro, è rotta
d'una fessura che lagrime goccia,
le quali, accolte, fóran quella grotta.
Lor corso in questa valle si diroccia;
fanno Acheronte, Stige e Flegetonta;
poi sen van giù per questa stretta doccia,

and at the point past which there's no descent,
they form Cocytus; since you are to see
what that pool is, I'll not describe it here."
And I asked him: "But if the rivulet
must follow such a course down from our world,
why can we see it only at this boundary?"
And he to me: "You know this place is round;
and though the way that you have come is long,
and always toward the left and toward the bottom,
you still have not completed all the circle:
so that, if something new appears to us,
it need not bring such wonder to your face."
And I again: "Master, where's Phlegethon
and where is Lethe? You omit the second
and say this rain of tears has formed the first."
"I'm pleased indeed," he said, "with all your questions;
yet one of them might well have found its answer
already—when you saw the red stream boiling.
You shall see Lethe, but past this abyss,
there where the spirits go to cleanse themselves
when their repented guilt is set aside."
Then he declared: "The time has come to quit
this wood; see that you follow close behind me;
these margins form a path that does not scorch,
and over them, all flaming vapor is quenched."

infin, là dove più non si dismonta,
fanno Cocito; e qual sia quello stagno
tu lo vedrai, però qui non si conta."
E io a lui: "Se 'l presente rigagno
si diriva così dal nostro mondo,
perché ci appar pur a questo vivagno?"
Ed elli a me: "Tu sai che 'l loco è tondo;
e tutto che tu sie venuto molto,
pur a sinistra, giù calando al fondo,
non se' ancor per tutto 'l cerchio vòlto;
per che, se cosa n'apparisce nova,
non de' addur maraviglia al tuo volto."
E io ancor: "Maestro, ove si trova
Flegetonta e Letè? ché de l'un taci,
e l'altro di' che si fa d'esta piova."
"In tutte tue question certo mi piaci,"
rispuose, "ma 'l bollor de l'acqua rossa
dovea ben solver l'una che tu faci.
Letè vedrai, ma fuor di questa fossa,
là dove vanno l'anime a lavarsi
quando la colpa pentuta è rimossa."
Poi disse: "Omai è tempo da scostarsi
dal bosco; fa che di retro a me vegne:
li margini fan via, che non son arsi,
e sopra loro ogne vapor si spegne."

CANTO XV

Now one of the hard borders bears us forward;
the river mist forms shadows overhead
and shields the shores and water from the fire.
Just as between Wissant and Bruges, the Flemings,
in terror of the tide that floods toward them,
have built a wall of dykes to daunt the sea;
and as the Paduans, along the Brenta,
build bulwarks to defend their towns and castles
before the dog days fall on Carentana;
just so were these embankments, even though
they were not built so high and not so broad,
whoever was the artisan who made them.
By now we were so distant from the wood
that I should not have made out where it was—
not even if I'd turned around to look—
when we came on a company of spirits
who made their way along the bank; and each
stared steadily at us, as in the dusk,
beneath the new moon, men look at each other.
They knit their brows and squinted at us—just
as an old tailor at his needle's eye.
And when that family looked harder, I
was recognized by one, who took me by
the hem and cried out: "This is marvelous!"
That spirit having stretched his arm toward me,
I fixed my eyes upon his baked, brown features,
so that the scorching of his face could not
prevent my mind from recognizing him;
and lowering my face to meet his face,
I answered him: "Are you here, Ser Brunetto?"
And he: "My son, do not mind if Brunetto
Latino lingers for a while with you
and lets the file he's with pass on ahead."

Still the Seventh Circle, Third Ring: the Violent against God. Second Zone: the Sodomites, endlessly crossing the fiery sands beneath the rain of fire. Brunetto Latini, whom Dante treats as mentor. Priscian, Francesco d'Accorso, and Andrea dei Mozzi, Bishop of Florence.

Ora cen porta l'un de' duri margini;
e 'l fummo del ruscel di sopra aduggia,
sì che dal foco salva l'acqua e li argini.
Quali Fiamminghi tra Guizzante e Bruggia,
temendo 'l fiotto che 'nver' lor s'avventa,
fanno lo schermo perché 'l mar si fuggia;
e quali Padoan lungo la Brenta,
per difender lor ville e lor castelli,
anzi che Carentana il caldo senta:
a tale imagine eran fatti quelli,
tutto che né sì alti né sì grossi,
qual che si fosse, lo maestro félli.
Già eravam da la selva rimossi
tanto, ch'i' non avrei visto dov' era,
perch' io in dietro rivolto mi fossi,
quando incontrammo d'anime una schiera
che venian lungo l'argine, e ciascuna
ci riguardava come suol da sera
guardare uno altro sotto nuova luna;
e sì ver' noi aguzzavan le ciglia
come 'l vecchio sartor fa ne la cruna.
Così adocchiato da cotal famiglia,
fui conosciuto da un, che mi prese
per lo lembo e gridò: "Qual maraviglia!"
E io, quando 'l suo braccio a me distese,
ficcaï li occhi per lo cotto aspetto,
sì che 'l viso abbrusciato non difese
la conoscenza sua al mio 'ntelletto;
e chinando la mano a la sua faccia,
rispuosi: "Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto?"
E quelli: "O figliuol mio, non ti dispiaccia
se Brunetto Latino un poco teco
ritorna 'n dietro e lascia andar la traccia."

I said: "With all my strength I pray you, stay;
and if you'd have me rest awhile with you,
I shall, if that please him with whom I go."
"O son," he said, "whoever of this flock
stops but a moment, stays a hundred years
and cannot shield himself when fire strikes.
Therefore move on; below—but close—I'll follow;
and then I shall rejoin my company,
who go lamenting their eternal sorrows."
I did not dare to leave my path for his
own level; but I walked with head bent low
as does a man who goes in reverence.
And he began: "What destiny or chance
has led you here below before your last
day came, and who is he who shows the way?"
"There, in the sunlit life above," I answered,
"before my years were full, I went astray
within a valley. Only yesterday
at dawn I turned my back upon it—but
when I was newly lost, he here appeared,
to guide me home again along this path."
And he to me: "If you pursue your star,
you cannot fail to reach a splendid harbor,
if in fair life, I judged you properly;
and if I had not died too soon for this,
on seeing Heaven was so kind to you,
I should have helped sustain you in your work.
But that malicious, that ungrateful people
come down, in ancient times, from Fiesole—
still keeping something of the rock and mountain—
for your good deeds, will be your enemy:
and there is cause—among the sour sorbs,
the sweet fig is not meant to bear its fruit.
The world has long since called them blind, a people
presumptuous, avaricious, envious;
be sure to cleanse yourself of their foul ways.
Your fortune holds in store such honor for you,
one party and the other will be hungry
for you—but keep the grass far from the goat.
For let the beasts of Fiesole find forage
among themselves, and leave the plant alone—
if still, among their dung, it rises up—

I' dissi lui: "Quanto posso, ven preco;
e se volete che con voi m'asseggia,
faròl, se piace a costui che vo seco."
"O figliuol," disse, "qual di questa greggia
s'arresta punto, giace poi cent' anni
sanz' arrostarsi quando 'l foco il feggia.
Però va oltre: i' ti verrò a' panni;
e poi rigiugnerò la mia masnada,
che va piangendo i suoi etterni danni."
Io non osava scender de la strada
per andar par di lui; ma 'l capo chino
tenea com' uom che reverente vada.
El cominciò: "Qual fortuna o destino
anzi l'ultimo dì qua giù ti mena?
e chi è questi che mostra 'l cammino?"
"Là sù di sopra, in la vita serena,"
rispuos' io lui, "mi smarri' in una valle,
avanti che l'età mia fosse piena.
Pur ier mattina le volsi le spalle:
questi m'apparve, tornand' ïo in quella,
e reducemi a ca per questo calle."
Ed elli a me: "Se tu segui tua stella,
non puoi fallire a glorïoso porto,
se ben m'accorsi ne la vita bella;
e s'io non fossi sì per tempo morto,
veggendo il cielo a te così benigno,
dato t'avrei a l'opera conforto.
Ma quello ingrato popolo maligno
che discese di Fiesole *ab* antico,
e tiene ancor del monte e del macigno,
ti si farà, per tuo ben far, nimico;
ed è ragion, ché tra li lazzi sorbi
si disconvien fruttare al dolce fico.
Vecchia fama nel mondo li chiama orbi;
gent' è avara, invidiosa e superba:
dai lor costumi fa che tu ti forbi.
La tua fortuna tanto onor ti serba,
che l'una parte e l'altra avranno fame
di te; ma lungi fia dal becco l'erba.
Faccian le bestie fiesolane strame
di lor medesme, e non tocchin la pianta,
s'alcuna surge ancora in lor letame,

in which there lives again the sacred seed
of those few Romans who remained in Florence
when such a nest of wickedness was built."
"If my desire were answered totally,"
I said to Ser Brunetto, "you'd still be
among, not banished from, humanity.
Within my memory is fixed—and now
moves me—your dear, your kind paternal image
when, in the world above, from time to time
you taught me how man makes himself eternal;
and while I live, my gratitude for that
must always be apparent in my words.
What you have told me of my course, I write;
I keep it with another text, for comment
by one who'll understand, if I may reach her.
One thing alone I'd have you plainly see:
so long as I am not rebuked by conscience,
I stand prepared for Fortune, come what may.
My ears find no new pledge in that prediction;
therefore, let Fortune turn her wheel as she
may please, and let the peasant turn his mattock."
At this, my master turned his head around
and toward the right, and looked at me and said:
"He who takes note of this has listened well."
But nonetheless, my talk with Ser Brunetto
continues, and I ask of him who are
his comrades of repute and excellence.
And he to me: "To know of some is good;
but for the rest, silence is to be praised;
the time we have is short for so much talk.
In brief, know that my company has clerics
and men of letters and of fame—and all
were stained by one same sin upon the earth.
That sorry crowd holds Priscian and Francesco
d'Accorso; and among them you can see,
if you have any longing for such scurf,
the one the Servant of His Servants sent
from the Arno to the Bacchiglione's banks,
and there he left his tendons strained by sin.
I would say more; but both my walk and words
must not be longer, for—beyond—I see
new smoke emerging from the sandy bed.

in cui riviva la sementa santa
di que' Roman che vi rimaser quando
fu fatto il nido di malizia tanta."
"Se fosse tutto pieno il mio dimando,"
rispuos' io lui, "voi non sareste ancora
de l'umana natura posto in bando;
ché 'n la mente m'è fitta, e or m'accora,
la cara e buona imagine paterna
di voi quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
m'insegnavate come l'uom s'etterna:
e quant' io l'abbia in grado, mentr' io vivo
convien che ne la mia lingua si scerna.
Ciò che narrate di mio corso scrivo,
e serbolo a chiosar con altro testo
a donna che saprà, s'a lei arrivo.
Tanto vogl' io che vi sia manifesto,
pur che mia coscïenza non mi garra,
ch'a la Fortuna, come vuol, son presto.
Non è nuova a li orecchi miei tal arra:
però giri Fortuna la sua rota
come le piace, e 'l villan la sua marra."
Lo mio maestro allora in su la gota
destra si volse in dietro e riguardommi;
poi disse: "Bene ascolta chi la nota."
Né per tanto di men parlando vommi
con ser Brunetto, e dimando chi sono
li suoi compagni più noti e più sommi.
Ed elli a me: "Saper d'alcuno è buono;
de li altri fia laudabile tacerci,
ché 'l tempo saria corto a tanto suono.
In somma sappi che tutti fur cherci
e litterati grandi e di gran fama,
d'un peccato medesmo al mondo lerci.
Priscian sen va con quella turba grama,
e Francesco d'Accorso anche; e vedervi,
s'avessi avuto di tal tigna brama,
colui potei che dal servo de' servi
fu trasmutato d'Arno in Bacchiglione,
dove lasciò li mal protesi nervi.
Di più direi; ma 'l venire e 'l sermone
più lungo esser non può, però ch'i' veggio
là surger nuovo fummo del sabbione.

Now people come with whom I must not be.
Let my *Tesoro*, in which I still live,
be precious to you; and I ask no more."
And then he turned and seemed like one of those
who race across the fields to win the green
cloth at Verona; of those runners, he
appeared to be the winner, not the loser.

Gente vien con la quale esser non deggio. 118
Sieti raccomandato il mio Tesoro,
nel qual io vivo ancora, e più non cheggio."
Poi si rivolse e parve di coloro 121
che corrono a Verona il drappo verde
per la campagna; e parve di costoro
quelli che vince, non colui che perde. 124



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CANTO XVI

No sooner had I reached the place where one
could hear a murmur, like a beehive's hum,
of waters as they fell to the next circle,
when, setting out together, three shades ran,
leaving another company that passed
beneath the rain of bitter punishment.
They came toward us, and each of them cried out:
"Stop, you who by your clothing seem to be
someone who comes from our indecent country!"
Ah me, what wounds I saw upon their limbs,
wounds new and old, wounds that the flames seared in!
It pains me still as I remember it.
When they cried out, my master paid attention;
he turned his face toward me and then he said:
"Now wait: to these one must show courtesy.
And were it not the nature of this place
for shafts of fire to fall, I'd say that haste
was seemlier for you than for those three."
As soon as we stood still, they started up
their ancient wail again; and when they reached us,
they formed a wheel, all three of them together.
As champions, naked, oiled, will always do,
each studying the grip that serves him best
before the blows and wounds begin to fall,
while wheeling so, each one made sure his face
was turned to me, so that their necks opposed
their feet in one uninterrupted flow.
And, "If the squalor of this shifting sand,
together with our baked and barren features,
makes us and our requests contemptible,"
one said, "then may our fame incline your mind
to tell us who you are, whose living feet
can make their way through Hell with such assurance.

Still the Seventh Circle, Third Ring, Second Zone: other Sodomites. Three Florentines, Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, Jacopo Rusticucci. The decadence of Florence. Phlegethon, cascading into the next zone. The cord of Dante, used by Virgil to summon a monstrous figure from the waters.

Già era in loco onde s'udia 'l rimbombo
de l'acqua che cadea ne l'altro giro,
simile a quel che l'arnie fanno rombo,
quando tre ombre insieme si partiro,
correndo, d'una torma che passava
sotto la pioggia de l'aspro martiro.
Venian ver' noi, e ciascuna gridava:
"Sòstati tu ch'a l'abito ne sembri
essere alcun di nostra terra prava."
Ahimè, che piaghe vidi ne' lor membri,
ricenti e vecchie, da le fiamme incese!
Ancor men duol pur ch'i' me ne rimembri.
A le lor grida il mio dottor s'attese;
volse 'l viso ver' me, e "Or aspetta,"
disse, "a costor si vuole esser cortese.
E se non fosse il foco che saetta
la natura del loco, i' dicerei
che meglio stesse a te che a lor la fretta."
Ricominciar, come noi restammo, ei
l'antico verso; e quando a noi fuor giunti,
fenno una rota di sé tutti e trei.
Qual sogliono i campion far nudi e unti,
avvisando lor presa e lor vantaggio,
prima che sien tra lor battuti e punti,
così rotando, ciascuno il visaggio
drizzava a me, sì che 'n contraro il collo
faceva ai piè continüo vïaggio.
E "Se miseria d'esto loco sollo
rende in dispetto noi e nostri prieghi,"
cominciò l'uno, "e 'l tinto aspetto e brollo,
la fama nostra il tuo animo pieghi
a dirne chi tu se', che i vivi piedi
così sicuro per lo 'nferno freghi.

He in whose steps you see me tread, although
he now must wheel about both peeled and naked,
was higher in degree than you believe:
he was a grandson of the good Gualdrada,
and Guido Guerra was his name; in life
his sword and his good sense accomplished much.
The other who, behind me, tramples sand—
Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, one whose voice
should have been heeded in the world above.
And I, who share this punishment with them,
was Jacopo Rusticucci; certainly,
more than all else, my savage wife destroyed me."
If I'd had shield and shelter from the fire,
I should have thrown myself down there among them—
I think my master would have sanctioned that;
but since that would have left me burned and baked,
my fear won out against the good intention
that made me so impatient to embrace them.
Then I began: "Your present state had fixed
not scorn but sorrow in me—and so deeply
that it will only disappear slowly—
as soon as my lord spoke to me with words
that made me understand what kind of men
were coming toward us, men of worth like yours.
For I am of your city; and with fondness,
I've always told and heard the others tell
of both your actions and your honored names.
I leave the gall and go for the sweet apples
that I was promised by my truthful guide;
but first I must descend into the center."
"So may your soul long lead your limbs and may
your fame shine after you," he answered then,
"tell us if courtesy and valor still
abide within our city as they did
when we were there, or have they disappeared
completely; for Guglielmo Borsiere,
who only recently has come to share
our torments, and goes there with our companions,
has caused us much affliction with his words."
"Newcomers to the city and quick gains
have brought excess and arrogance to you,
o Florence, and you weep for it already!"

Questi, l'orme di cui pestar mi vedi,
tutto che nudo e dipelato vada,
fu di grado maggior che tu non credi:
nepote fu de la buona Gualdrada;
Guido Guerra ebbe nome, e in sua vita
fece col senno assai e con la spada.
L'altro, ch'appresso me la rena trita,
è Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, la cui voce
nel mondo sù dovria esser gradita.
E io, che posto son con loro in croce,
Iacopo Rusticucci fui, e certo
la fiera moglie più ch'altro mi nuoce."
S'i' fossi stato dal foco coperto,
gittato mi sarei tra lor di sotto,
e credo che 'l dottor l'avria sofferto;
ma perch' io mi sarei brusciato e cotto,
vinse paura la mia buona voglia
che di loro abbracciar mi facea ghiotto.
Poi cominciai: "Non dispetto, ma doglia
la vostra condizion dentro mi fisse,
tanta che tardi tutta si dispoglia,
tosto che questo mio segnor mi disse
parole per le quali i' mi pensai
che qual voi siete, tal gente venisse.
Di vostra terra sono, e sempre mai
l'ovra di voi e li onorati nomi
con affezion ritrassi e ascoltai.
Lascio lo fele e vo per dolci pomi
promessi a me per lo verace duca;
ma 'nfino al centro pria convien ch'i' tomi."
"Se lungamente l'anima conduca
le membra tue," rispuose quelli ancora,
"e se la fama tua dopo te luca,
cortesia e valor dì se dimora
ne la nostra città sì come suole,
o se del tutto se n'è gita fora;
ché Guiglielmo Borsiere, il qual si duole
con noi per poco e va là coi compagni,
assai ne cruccia con le sue parole."
"La gente nuova e i sùbiti guadagni
orgoglio e dismisura han generata,
Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni."

So I cried out with face upraised; the three
looked at each other when they heard my answer
as men will stare when they have heard the truth.
"If you can always offer a reply
so readily to others," said all three,
"then happy you who speak, at will, so clearly.
So, if you can escape these lands of darkness
and see the lovely stars on your return,
when you repeat with pleasure, 'I was there,'
be sure that you remember us to men."
At this they broke their wheel; and as they fled,
their swift legs seemed to be no less than wings.
The time it took for them to disappear—
more brief than time it takes to say "amen";
and so, my master thought it right to leave.
I followed him. We'd only walked a little
when roaring water grew so near to us
we hardly could have heard each other speak.
And even as the river that is first
to take its own course eastward from Mount Viso,
along the left flank of the Apennines
(which up above is called the Acquacheta,
before it spills into its valley bed
and flows without that name beyond Forlì),
reverberates above San Benedetto
dell'Alpe as it cascades in one leap,
where there is space enough to house a thousand;
so did we hear that blackened water roar
as it plunged down a steep and craggy bank,
enough to deafen us in a few hours.
Around my waist I had a cord as girdle,
and with it once I thought I should be able
to catch the leopard with the painted hide.
And after I had loosened it completely,
just as my guide commanded me to do,
I handed it to him, knotted and coiled.
At this, he wheeled around upon his right
and cast it, at some distance from the edge,
straight down into the depth of the ravine.
"And surely something strange must here reply,"
I said within myself, "to this strange sign—
the sign my master follows with his eye."

Così gridai con la faccia levata;
e i tre, che ciò inteser per risposta,
guardar l'un l'altro com' al ver si guata.
"Se l'altre volte sì poco ti costa,"
rispuoser tutti, "il satisfare altrui,
felice te se sì parli a tua posta!
Però, se campi d'esti luoghi bui
e torni a riveder le belle stelle,
quando ti gioverà dicere 'I' fui,'
fa che di noi a la gente favelle."
Indi rupper la rota, e a fuggirsi
ali sembiar le gambe loro isnelle.
Un amen non saria possuto dirsi
tosto così com' e' fuoro spariti;
per ch'al maestro parve di partirsi.
Io lo seguiva, e poco eravam iti,
che 'l suon de l'acqua n'era sì vicino,
che per parlar saremmo a pena uditi.
Come quel fiume c'ha proprio cammino
prima dal Monte Viso 'nver' levante,
da la sinistra costa d'Apennino,
che si chiama Acquacheta suso, avante
che si divalli giù nel basso letto,
e a Forlì di quel nome è vacante,
rimbomba là sovra San Benedetto
de l'Alpe per cadere ad una scesa
ove dovea per mille esser recetto;
così, giù d'una ripa discoscesa,
trovammo risonar quell' acqua tinta,
sì che 'n poc' ora avria l'orecchia offesa.
Io avea una corda intorno cinta,
e con essa pensai alcuna volta
prender la lonza a la pelle dipinta.
Poscia ch'io l'ebbi tutta da me sciolta,
sì come 'l duca m'avea comandato,
porsila a lui aggroppata e ravvolta.
Ond' ei si volse inver' lo destro lato,
e alquanto di lunge da la sponda
la gittò giuso in quell' alto burrato.
"E' pur convien che novità risponda,"
dicea fra me medesmo, "al novo cenno
che 'l maestro con l'occhio sì seconda."

Ah, how much care men ought to exercise
with those whose penetrating intellect
can see our thoughts—not just our outer act!
He said to me: "Now there will soon emerge
what I await and what your thought has conjured:
it soon must be discovered to your sight."
Faced with that truth which seems a lie, a man
should always close his lips as long as he can—
to tell it shames him, even though he's blameless;
but here I can't be still; and by the lines
of this my Comedy, reader, I swear—
and may my verse find favor for long years—
that through the dense and darkened air I saw
a figure swimming, rising up, enough
to bring amazement to the firmest heart,
like one returning from the waves where he
went down to loose an anchor snagged upon
a reef or something else hid in the sea,
who stretches upward and draws in his feet.

Ahi quanto cauti li uomini esser dienno
presso a color che non veggion pur l'ovra,
ma per entro i pensier miran col senno!
El disse a me: "Tosto verrà di sovra
ciò ch'io attendo e che il tuo pensier sogna;
tosto convien ch'al tuo viso si scovra."
Sempre a quel ver c'ha faccia di menzogna
de' l'uom chiuder le labbra fin ch'el puote,
però che sanza colpa fa vergogna;
ma qui tacer nol posso; e per le note
di questa comedìa, lettor, ti giuro,
s'elle non sien di lunga grazia vòte,
ch'i' vidi per quell' aere grosso e scuro
venir notando una figura in suso,
maravigliosa ad ogne cor sicuro,
sì come torna colui che va giuso
talora a solver l'àncora ch'aggrappa
o scoglio o altro che nel mare è chiuso,
che 'n sù si stende e da piè si rattrappa.

CANTO XVII

"Behold the beast who bears the pointed tail,
who crosses mountains, shatters weapons, walls!
Behold the one whose stench fills all the world!"
So did my guide begin to speak to me,
and then he signaled him to come ashore
close to the end of those stone passageways.
And he came on, that filthy effigy
of fraud, and landed with his head and torso
but did not draw his tail onto the bank.
The face he wore was that of a just man,
so gracious was his features' outer semblance;
and all his trunk, the body of a serpent;
he had two paws, with hair up to the armpits;
his back and chest as well as both his flanks
had been adorned with twining knots and circlets.
No Turks or Tartars ever fashioned fabrics
more colorful in background and relief,
nor had Arachne ever loomed such webs.
As boats will sometimes lie along the shore,
with part of them on land and part in water,
and just as there, among the guzzling Germans,
the beaver sets himself when he means war,
so did that squalid beast lie on the margin
of stone that serves as border for the sand.
And all his tail was quivering in the void
while twisting upward its envenomed fork,
which had a tip just like a scorpion's.
My guide said: "Now we'd better bend our path
a little, till we reach as far as that
malicious beast which crouches over there."
Thus we descended on the right hand side
and moved ten paces on the stony brink
in order to avoid the sand and fire.

The monster Geryon. The Seventh Circle, Third Ring, Third Zone: the Violent against Nature and Art (Usurers), each seated beneath the rain of fire with a purse—bearing his family's heraldic emblem—around his neck. Descent to the Eighth Circle on the back of Geryon.

"Ecco la fiera con la coda aguzza,
che passa i monti e rompe i muri e l'armi!
Ecco colei che tutto 'l mondo appuzza!"
Sì cominciò lo mio duca a parlarmi;
e accennolle che venisse a proda,
vicino al fin d'i passeggiati marmi.
E quella sozza imagine di froda
sen venne, e arrivò la testa e 'l busto,
ma 'n su la riva non trasse la coda.
La faccia sua era faccia d'uom giusto,
tanto benigna avea di fuor la pelle,
e d'un serpente tutto l'altro fusto;
due branche avea pilose insin l'ascelle;
lo dosso e 'l petto e ambedue le coste
dipinti avea di nodi e di rotelle.
Con più color, sommesse e sovraposte
non fer mai drappi Tartari né Turchi,
né fuor tai tele per Aragne imposte.
Come talvolta stanno a riva i burchi,
che parte sono in acqua e parte in terra,
e come là tra li Tedeschi lurchi
lo bivero s'assetta a far sua guerra,
così la fiera pessima si stava
su l'orlo ch'è di pietra e'l sabbion serra.
Nel vano tutta sua coda guizzava,
torcendo in sù la venenosa forca
ch'a guisa di scorpion la punta armava.
Lo duca disse: "Or convien che si torca
la nostra via un poco insino a quella
bestia malvagia che colà si corca."
Però scendemmo a la destra mammella,
e diece passi femmo in su lo stremo,
per ben cessar la rena e la fiammella.

When we had reached the sprawling beast, I saw—
a little farther on, upon the sand—
some sinners sitting near the fissured rock.
And here my master said to me: "So that
you may experience this ring in full,
go now, and see the state in which they are.
But keep your conversation with them brief;
till you return, I'll parley with this beast,
to see if he can lend us his strong shoulders."
So I went on alone and even farther
along the seventh circle's outer margin,
to where the melancholy people sat.
Despondency was bursting from their eyes;
this side, then that, their hands kept fending off,
at times the flames, at times the burning soil:
not otherwise do dogs in summer—now
with muzzle, now with paw—when they are bitten
by fleas or gnats or by the sharp gadfly.
When I had set my eyes upon the faces
of some on whom that painful fire falls,
I recognized no one; but I did notice
that from the neck of each a purse was hung
that had a special color and an emblem,
and their eyes seemed to feast upon these pouches.
Looking about—when I had come among them—
I saw a yellow purse with azure on it
that had the face and manner of a lion.
Then, as I let my eyes move farther on,
I saw another purse that was bloodred,
and it displayed a goose more white than butter.
And one who had an azure, pregnant sow
inscribed as emblem on his white pouch, said
to me: "What are you doing in this pit?
Now you be off; and since you're still alive,
remember that my neighbor Vitaliano
shall yet sit here, upon my left hand side.
Among these Florentines, I'm Paduan;
I often hear them thunder in my ears,
shouting, 'Now let the sovereign cavalier,
the one who'll bring the purse with three goats, come!'"
At this he slewed his mouth, and then he stuck
his tongue out, like an ox that licks its nose.

E quando noi a lei venuti semo,
poco più oltre veggio in su la rena
gente seder propinqua al loco scemo.
Quivi 'l maestro "Acciò che tutta piena
esperïenza d'esto giron porti,"
mi disse, "va, e vedi la lor mena.
Li tuoi ragionamenti sian là corti;
mentre che torni, parlerò con questa,
che ne conceda i suoi omeri forti."
Così ancor su per la strema testa
di quel settimo cerchio tutto solo
andai, dove sedea la gente mesta.
Per li occhi fora scoppiava lor duolo;
di qua, di là soccorrien con le mani
quando a' vapori, e quando al caldo suolo:
non altrimenti fan di state i cani
or col ceffo or col piè, quando son morsi
o da pulci o da mosche o da tafani.
Poi che nel viso a certi li occhi porsi,
ne' quali 'l doloroso foco casca,
non ne conobbi alcun; ma io m'accorsi
che dal collo a ciascun pendea una tasca
ch'avea certo colore e certo segno,
e quindi par che 'l loro occhio si pasca.
E com' io riguardando tra lor vegno,
in una borsa gialla vidi azzurro
che d'un leone avea faccia e contegno.
Poi, procedendo di mio sguardo il curro,
vidine un'altra come sangue rossa,
mostrando un'oca bianca più che burro.
E un che d'una scrofa azzurra e grossa
segnato avea lo suo sacchetto bianco,
mi disse: "Che fai tu in questa fossa?
Or te ne va; e perché se' vivo anco,
sappi che 'l mio vicin Vitalïano
sederà qui dal mio sinistro fianco.
Con questi Fiorentin son padoano:
spesse fïate mi 'ntronan li orecchi
gridando: 'Vegna 'l cavalier sovrano,
che recherà la tasca con tre becchi!' "
Qui distorse la bocca e di fuor trasse
la lingua, come bue che 'l naso lecchi.

And I, afraid that any longer stay
might anger him who'd warned me to be brief,
made my way back from those exhausted souls.
I found my guide, who had already climbed
upon the back of that brute animal,
and he told me: "Be strong and daring now,
for our descent is by this kind of stairs:
you mount in front; I want to be between,
so that the tail can't do you any harm."
As one who feels the quartan fever near
and shivers, with his nails already blue,
the sight of shade enough to make him shudder,
so I became when I had heard these words;
but then I felt the threat of shame, which makes
a servant—in his kind lord's presence—brave.
I settled down on those enormous shoulders;
I wished to say (and yet my voice did not
come as I thought): "See that you hold me tight."
But he who—other times, in other dangers—
sustained me, just as soon as I had mounted,
clasped me within his arms and propped me up,
and said: "Now, Geryon, move on; take care
to keep your circles wide, your landing slow;
remember the new weight you're carrying."
Just like a boat that, starting from its moorings,
moves backward, backward, so that beast took off;
and when he felt himself completely clear,
he turned his tail to where his chest had been
and, having stretched it, moved it like an eel,
and with his paws he gathered in the air.
I do not think that there was greater fear
in Phaethon when he let his reins go free—
for which the sky, as one still sees, was scorched—
nor in poor Icarus when he could feel
his sides unwinged because the wax was melting,
his father shouting to him, "That way's wrong!"
than was in me when, on all sides, I saw
that I was in the air, and everything
had faded from my sight—except the beast.
Slowly, slowly, swimming, he moves on;
he wheels and he descends, but I feel only
the wind upon my face and the wind rising.

E io, temendo no 'l più star crucciasse
lui che di poco star m'avea 'mmonito,
torna'mi in dietro da l'anime lasse.
Trova' il duca mio ch'era salito
già su la groppa del fiero animale,
e disse a me: "Or sie forte e ardito.
Omai si scende per sì fatte scale;
monta dinanzi, ch'i' voglio esser mezzo,
sì che la coda non possa far male."
Qual è colui che sì presso ha 'l riprezzo
de la quartana, c'ha già l'unghie smorte,
e triema tutto pur guardando 'l rezzo,
tal divenn' io a le parole porte;
ma vergogna mi fé le sue minacce,
che innanzi a buon segnor fa servo forte.
I' m'assettai in su quelle spallacce;
sì volli dir, ma la voce non venne
com' io credetti: "Fa che tu m'abbracce."
Ma esso, ch'altra volta mi sovvenne
ad altro forse, tosto ch'i' montai
con le braccia m'avvinse e mi sostenne;
e disse: "Gerïon, moviti omai:
le rote larghe, e lo scender sia poco;
pensa la nova soma che tu hai."
Come la navicella esce di loco
in dietro in dietro, sì quindi si tolse;
e poi ch'al tutto si sentì a gioco,
là 'v' era 'l petto, la coda rivolse,
e quella tesa, come anguilla, mosse,
e con le branche l'aere a sé raccolse.
Maggior paura non credo che fosse
quando Fetonte abbandonò li freni,
per che 'l ciel, come pare ancor, si cosse;
né quando Icaro misero le reni
sentì spennar per la scaldata cera,
gridando il padre a lui "Mala via tieni!"
che fu la mia, quando vidi ch'i' era
ne l'aere d'ogne parte, e vidi spenta
ogne veduta fuor che de la fera.
Ella sen va notando lenta lenta;
rota e discende, ma non me n'accorgo
se non che al viso e di sotto mi venta.

Already, on our right, I heard the torrent
resounding, there beneath us, horribly,
so that I stretched my neck and looked below.
Then I was more afraid of falling off,
for I saw fires and I heard laments,
at which I tremble, crouching, and hold fast.
And now I saw what I had missed before:
his wheeling and descent—because great torments
were drawing closer to us on all sides.
Just as a falcon long upon the wing—
who, seeing neither lure nor bird, compels
the falconer to cry, "Ah me, you fall!"—
descends, exhausted, in a hundred circles,
where he had once been swift, and sets himself,
embittered and enraged, far from his master;
such, at the bottom of the jagged rock,
was Geryon, when he had set us down.
And once our weight was lifted from his back,
he vanished like an arrow from a bow.

Io sentia già da la man destra il gorgo
far sotto noi un orribile scroscio,
per che con li occhi 'n giù la testa sporgo.
Allor fu' io più timido a lo stoscio,
però ch'i' vidi fuochi e senti' pianti;
ond' io tremando tutto mi raccoscio.
E vidi poi, ché nol vedea davanti,
lo scendere e 'l girar per li gran mali
che s'appressavan da diversi canti.
Come 'l falcon ch'è stato assai su l'ali,
che sanza veder logoro o uccello
fa dire al falconiere "Omè, tu cali!"
discende lasso onde si move isnello,
per cento rote, e da lunge si pone
dal suo maestro, disdegnoso e fello;
così ne puose al fondo Gerïone
al piè al piè de la stagliata rocca,
e, discarcate le nostre persone,
si dileguò come da corda cocca.



XVII·3

And became on, that fifty effigy of bread



XVII·50



XVII·127

THAÏS
XVIII
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CANTO XVIII

There is a place in Hell called Malebolge,
made all of stone the color of crude iron,
as is the wall that makes its way around it.
Right in the middle of this evil field
is an abyss, a broad and yawning pit,
whose structure I shall tell in its due place.
The belt, then, that extends between the pit
and that hard, steep wall's base is circular;
its bottom has been split into ten valleys.
Just as, where moat on moat surrounds a castle
in order to keep guard upon the walls,
the ground they occupy will form a pattern,
so did the valleys here form a design;
and as such fortresses have bridges running
right from their thresholds toward the outer bank,
so here, across the banks and ditches, ridges
ran from the base of that rock wall until
the pit that cuts them short and joins them all.
This was the place in which we found ourselves
when Geryon had put us down; the poet
held to the left, and I walked at his back.
Upon the right I saw new misery,
I saw new tortures and new torturers,
filling the first of Malebolge's moats.
Along its bottom, naked sinners moved,
to our side of the middle, facing us;
beyond that, they moved with us, but more quickly—
as, in the year of Jubilee, the Romans,
confronted by great crowds, contrived a plan
that let the people pass across the bridge,
for to one side went all who had their eyes
upon the Castle, heading toward St. Peter's,
and to the other, those who faced the Mount.

The Eighth Circle, called Malebolge ("Evil-Pouches"), with its Ten Pouches, where "ordinary" fraud is punished. The First Pouch, with Panders and Seducers scourged by horned demons. Venèdico Caccianemico. Jason. The Second Pouch, with Flatterers immersed in excrement. Alessio Interminei. Thaïs.

Luogo è in inferno detto Malebolge,
tutto di pietra di color ferrigno,
come la cerchia che dintorno il volge.
Nel dritto mezzo del campo maligno
vaneggia un pozzo assai largo e profondo,
di cui *suo loco* dicerò l'ordigno.
Quel cinghio che rimane adunque è tondo
tra 'l pozzo e 'l piè de l'alta ripa dura,
e ha distinto in dieci valli il fondo.
Quale, dove per guardia de le mura
più e più fossi cingon li castelli,
la parte dove son rende figura,
tale imagine quivi facean quelli;
e come a tai fortezze da' lor sogli
a la ripa di fuor son ponticelli,
così da imo de la roccia scogli
movien che ricidien li argini e ' fossi
infino al pozzo che i tronca e raccogli.
In questo luogo, de la schiena scossi
di Gerïon, trovammoci; e 'l poeta
tenne a sinistra, e io dietro mi mossi.
A la man destra vidi nova pieta,
novo tormento e novi frustatori,
di che la prima bolgia era repleta.
Nel fondo erano ignudi i peccatori;
dal mezzo in qua ci venien verso 'l volto,
di là con noi, ma con passi maggiori,
come i Roman per l'essercito molto,
l'anno del giubileo, su per lo ponte
hanno a passar la gente modo colto,
che da l'un lato tutti hanno la fronte
verso 'l castello e vanno a Santo Pietro,
da l'altra sponda vanno verso 'l monte.

Both left and right, along the somber rock,
I saw horned demons with enormous whips,
who lashed those spirits cruelly from behind.
Ah, how their first strokes made those sinners lift
their heels! Indeed no sinner waited for
a second stroke to fall—or for a third.
And as I moved ahead, my eyes met those
of someone else, and suddenly I said:
"I was not spared the sight of him before."
And so I stayed my steps, to study him;
my gentle guide had stopped together with me
and gave me leave to take a few steps back.
That scourged soul thought that he could hide himself
by lowering his face; it helped him little,
for I said: "You, who cast your eyes upon
the ground, if these your features are not false,
must be Venèdico Caccianemico;
but what brings you to sauces so piquant?"
And he to me: "I speak unwillingly;
but your plain speech, that brings the memory
of the old world to me, is what compels me;
For it was I who led Ghisolabella
to do as the Marquis would have her do—
however they retell that filthy tale.
I'm not the only Bolognese who weeps here;
indeed, this place is so crammed full of us
that not so many tongues have learned to say
sipa between the Sàvena and Reno;
if you want faith and testament of that,
just call to mind our avaricious hearts."
And as he spoke, a demon cudgeled him
with his horsewhip and cried: "Be off, you pimp,
there are no women here for you to trick."
I joined my escort once again; and then
with but few steps, we came upon a place
where, from the bank, a rocky ridge ran out.
We climbed quite easily along that height;
and turning right upon its jagged back,
we took our leave of those eternal circlings.
When we had reached the point where that ridge opens
below to leave a passage for the lashed,
my guide said: "Stay, and make sure that the sight

Di qua, di là, su per lo sasso tetro
vidi demon cornuti con gran ferze,
che li battien crudelmente di retro.
Ahi come facean lor levar le berze
a le prime percosse! già nessuno
le seconde aspettava né le terze.
Mentr' io andava, li occhi miei in uno
furo scontrati; e io sì tosto dissi:
"Già di veder costui non son digiuno."
Per ch'ïo a figurarlo i piedi affissi;
e 'l dolce duca meco si ristette,
e assentio ch'alquanto in dietro gissi.
E quel frustato celar si credette
bassando 'l viso; ma poco li valse,
ch'io dissi: "O tu che l'occhio a terra gette,
se le fazion che porti non son false,
Venedico se' tu Caccianemico.
Ma che ti mena a sì pungenti salse?"
Ed elli a me: "Mal volontier lo dico;
ma sforzami la tua chiara favella,
che mi fa sovvenir del mondo antico.
I' fui colui che la Ghisolabella
condussi a far la voglia del marchese,
come che suoni la sconcia novella.
E non pur io qui piango bolognese;
anzi n'è questo loco tanto pieno,
che tante lingue non son ora apprese
a dicer 'sipa' tra Sàvena e Reno;
e se di ciò vuoi fede o testimonio,
rècati a mente il nostro avaro seno."
Così parlando il percosse un demonio
de la sua scurïada, e disse: "Via,
ruffian! qui non son femmine da conio."
I' mi raggiunsi con la scorta mia;
poscia con pochi passi divenimmo
là 'v' uno scoglio de la ripa uscia.
Assai leggeramente quel salimmo;
e vòlti a destra su per la sua scheggia,
da quelle cerchie etterne ci partimmo.
Quando noi fummo là dov' el vaneggia
di sotto per dar passo a li sferzati,
lo duca disse: "Attienti, e fa che feggia

of still more ill-born spirits strikes your eyes,
for you have not yet seen their faces, since
they have been moving in our own direction."
From the old bridge we looked down at the ranks
of those approaching from the other side;
they too were driven onward by the lash.
And my good master, though I had not asked,
urged me: "Look at that mighty one who comes
and does not seem to shed a tear of pain:
how he still keeps the image of a king!
That shade is Jason, who with heart and head
deprived the men of Colchis of their ram.
He made a landfall on the isle of Lemnos
after its women, bold and pitiless,
had given all their island males to death.
With polished words and love signs he took in
Hypsipyle, the girl whose own deception
had earlier deceived the other women.
And he abandoned her, alone and pregnant;
such guilt condemns him to such punishment;
and for Medea, too, revenge is taken.
With him go those who cheated so: this is
enough for you to know of that first valley
and of the souls it clamps within its jaws."
We were already where the narrow path
reaches and intersects the second bank
and serves as shoulder for another bridge.
We heard the people whine in the next pouch
and heard them as they snorted with their snouts;
we heard them use their palms to beat themselves.
And exhalations, rising from below,
stuck to the banks, encrusting them with mold,
and so waged war against both eyes and nose.
The bottom is so deep, we found no spot
to see it from, except by climbing up
the arch until the bridge's highest point.
This was the place we reached; the ditch beneath
held people plunged in excrement that seemed
as if it had been poured from human privies.
And while my eyes searched that abysmal sight,
I saw one with a head so smeared with shit,
one could not see if he were lay or cleric.

lo viso in te di quest' altri mal nati,
ai quali ancor non vedesti la faccia
però che son con noi insieme andati."
Del vecchio ponte guardavam la traccia
che venìa verso noi da l'altra banda,
e che la ferza similmente scaccia.
E 'l buon maestro, sanza mia dimanda,
mi disse: "Guarda quel grande che vene,
e per dolor non par lagrime spanda:
quanto aspetto reale ancor ritene!
Quelli è Iasón, che per cuore e per senno
li Colchi del monton privati féne.
Ello passò per l'isola di Lenno
poi che l'ardite femmine spietate
tutti li maschi loro a morte dienno.
Ivi con segni e con parole ornate
Isifile ingannò, la giovinetta
che prima avea tutte l'altre ingannate.
Lasciolla quivi, gravida, soletta;
tal colpa a tal martiro lui condanna;
e anche di Medea si fa vendetta.
Con lui sen va chi da tal parte inganna;
e questo basti de la prima valle
sapere e di color che 'n sé assanna."
Già eravam là 've lo stretto calle
con l'argine secondo s'incrocicchia,
e fa di quello ad un altr' arco spalle.
Quindi sentimmo gente che si nicchia
ne l'altra bolgia e che col muso scuffa,
e sé medesma con le palme picchia.
Le ripe eran grommate d'una muffa,
per l'alito di giù che vi s'appasta,
che con li occhi e col naso facea zuffa.
Lo fondo è cupo sì, che non ci basta
loco a veder sanza montare al dosso
de l'arco, ove lo scoglio più sovrasta.
Quivi venimmo; e quindi giù nel fosso
vidi gente attuffata in uno sterco
che da li uman privadi parea mosso.
E mentre ch'io là giù con l'occhio cerco,
vidi un col capo sì di merda lordo,
che non parëa s'era laico o cherco.

He howled: "Why do you stare more greedily
at me than at the others who are filthy?"
And I: "Because, if I remember right,
I have seen you before, with your hair dry;
and so I eye you more than all: you are
Alessio Interminei of Lucca."
Then he continued, pounding on his pate:
"I am plunged here because of flatteries—
of which my tongue had such sufficiency."
At which my guide advised me: "See you thrust
your head a little farther to the front,
so that your eyes can clearly glimpse the face
of that besmirched, bedraggled harridan
who scratches at herself with shit-filled nails,
and now she crouches, now she stands upright.
That is Thaïs, the harlot who returned
her lover's question, 'Are you very grateful
to me?' by saying, 'Yes, enormously.'"
And now our sight has had its fill of this."

Quei mi sgridò: "Perché se' tu sì gordo
di riguardar più me che li altri brutti?"
E io a lui: "Perché, se ben ricordo,
già t'ho veduto coi capelli asciutti,
e se' Alessio Interminei da Lucca:
però t'adocchio più che li altri tutti."
Ed elli allor, battendosi la zucca:
"Qua giù m'hanno sommerso le lusinghe
ond' io non ebbi mai la lingua stucca."
Appresso ciò lo duca "Fa che pinghe,"
mi disse, "il viso un poco più avante,
sì che la faccia ben con l'occhio attinghe
di quella sozza e scapigliata fante
che là si graffia con l'unghie merdose,
e or s'accoscia e ora è in piedi stante.
Taïde è, la puttana che rispuose
al drudo suo quando disse 'Ho io grazie
grandi apo te?': 'Anzi maravigliose!'
E quinci sian le nostre viste sazie."

CANTO XIX

O Simon Magus! O his sad disciples!
Rapacious ones, who take the things of God,
that ought to be the brides of Righteousness,
and make them fornicate for gold and silver!
The time has come to let the trumpet sound
for you; your place is here in this third pouch.
We had already reached the tomb beyond
and climbed onto the ridge, where its high point
hangs just above the middle of the ditch.
O Highest Wisdom, how much art you show
in heaven, earth, and this sad world below,
how just your power is when it allots!
Along the sides and down along the bottom,
I saw that livid rock was perforated:
the openings were all one width and round.
They did not seem to me less broad or more
than those that in my handsome San Giovanni
were made to serve as basins for baptizing;
and one of these, not many years ago,
I broke for someone who was drowning in it:
and let this be my seal to set men straight.
Out from the mouth of each hole there emerged
a sinner's feet and so much of his legs
up to the thigh; the rest remained within.
Both soles of every sinner were on fire;
their joints were writhing with such violence,
they would have severed withes and ropes of grass.
As flame on oily things will only stir
along the outer surface, so there, too,
that fire made its way from heels to toes.
"Master," I said, "who is that shade who suffers
and quivers more than all his other comrades,
that sinner who is licked by redder flames?"

The Eighth Circle, Third Pouch, where the Simonists are set, heads down, into holes in the rock, with their protruding feet tormented by flames. Pope Nicholas III. Dante's invective against simoniacal popes.

O Simon mago, o miseri seguaci
che le cose di Dio, che di bontate
deon essere spose, e voi rapaci
per oro e per argento avolterate,
or convien che per voi suoni la tromba,
però che ne la terza bolgia state.
Già eravamo, a la seguente tomba,
montati de lo scoglio in quella parte
ch'a punto sovra mezzo 'l fosso piomba.
O somma sapïenza, quanta è l'arte
che mostri in cielo, in terra e nel mal mondo,
e quanto giusto tua virtù comparte!
Io vidi per le coste e per lo fondo
piena la pietra livida di fóri,
d'un largo tutti e ciascun era tondo.
Non mi parean men ampi né maggiori
che que' che son nel mio bel San Giovanni,
fatti per loco d'i battezzatori;
l'un de li quali, ancor non è molt' anni,
rupp' io per un che dentro v'annegava:
e questo sia suggel ch'ogn' omo sganni.
Fuor de la bocca a ciascun soperchiava
d'un peccator li piedi e de le gambe
infino al grosso, e l'altro dentro stava.
Le piante erano a tutti accese intrambe;
per che sì forte guizzavan le giunte,
che spezzate averien ritorte e strambe.
Qual suole il fiammeggiar de le cose unte
muoversi pur su per la strema buccia,
tal era lì dai calcagni a le punte.
"Chi è colui, maestro, che si cruccia
guizzando più che li altri suoi consorti,"
diss' io, "e cui più roggia fiamma succia?"

And he to me: "If you would have me lead
you down along the steepest of the banks,
from him you'll learn about his self and sins."
And I: "What pleases you will please me too:
you are my lord; you know I do not swerve
from what you will; you know what is unspoken."
At this we came upon the fourth embankment;
we turned and, keeping to the left, descended
into the narrow, perforated bottom.
My good lord did not let me leave his side
until he'd brought me to the hole that held
that sinner who lamented with his legs.
"Whoever you may be, dejected soul,
whose head is downward, planted like a pole,"
my words began, "do speak if you are able."
I stood as does the friar who confesses
the foul assassin who, fixed fast, head down,
calls back the friar, and so delays his death;
and he cried out: "Are you already standing,
already standing there, o Boniface?
The book has lied to me by several years.
Are you so quickly sated with the riches
for which you did not fear to take by guile
the Lovely Lady, then to violate her?"
And I became like those who stand as if
they have been mocked, who cannot understand
what has been said to them and can't respond.
But Virgil said: "Tell this to him at once:
'I am not he—not whom you think I am.'"
And I replied as I was told to do.
At this the spirit twisted both his feet,
and sighing and with a despairing voice,
he said: "What is it, then, you want of me?
If you have crossed the bank and climbed so far
to find out who I am, then know that I
was one of those who wore the mighty mantle,
and surely was a son of the she-bear,
so eager to advance the cubs that I
pursed wealth above while here I purse myself.
Below my head there is the place of those
who took the way of simony before me;
and they are stuffed within the clefts of stone.

Ed elli a me: "Se tu vuo' ch'i' ti porti
là giù per quella ripa che più giace,
da lui saprai di sé e de' suoi torti."
E io: "Tanto m'è bel, quanto a te piace:
tu se' segnore, e sai ch'i' non mi parto
dal tuo volere, e sai quel che si tace."
Allor venimmo in su l'argine quarto;
volgemmo e discendemmo a mano stanca
là giù nel fondo foracchiato e arto.
Lo buon maestro ancor de la sua anca
non mi dipuose, sì mi giunse al rotto
di quel che si piangeva con la zanca.
"O qual che se' che 'l di sù tien di sotto,
anima trista come pal commessa,"
comincia' io a dir, "se puoi, fa motto."
Io stava come 'l frate che confessa
lo perfido assessin, che, poi ch'è fitto,
richiama lui per che la morte cessa.
Ed el gridò: "Se' tu già costì ritto,
se' tu già costì ritto, Bonifazio?
Di parecchi anni mi mentì lo scritto.
Se' tu sì tosto di quell' aver sazio
per lo qual non temesti tòrre a 'nganno
la bella donna, e poi di farne strazio?"
Tal mi fec' io, quai son color che stanno,
per non intender ciò ch'è lor risposto,
quasi scornati, e risponder non sanno.
Allor Virgilio disse: "Dilli tosto:
'Non son colui, non son colui che credi'";
e io rispuosi come a me fu imposto.
Per che lo spirto tutti storse i piedi;
poi, sospirando e con voce di pianto,
mi disse: "Dunque che a me richiedi?
Se di saper ch'i' sia ti cal cotanto,
che tu abbi però la ripa corsa,
sappi ch'i' fui vestito del gran manto;
e veramente fui figliuol de l'orsa,
cupido sì per avanzar li orsatti,
che sù l'avere e qui me misi in borsa.
Di sotto al capo mio son li altri tratti
che precedetter me simoneggiando,
per le fessure de la pietra piatti.

I, too, shall yield my place and fall below
when he arrives, the one for whom I had
mistaken you when I was quick to question.
But I have baked my feet a longer time,
have stood like this, upon my head, than he
is to stand planted here with scarlet feet:
for after him, one uglier in deeds
will come, a lawless shepherd from the west,
worthy to cover him and cover me.
He'll be a second Jason, of whom we read
in *Maccabees*; and just as Jason's king
was soft to him, so shall the king of France
be soft to this one." And I do not know
if I was too rash here—I answered so:
"Then tell me now, how much gold did our Lord
ask that Saint Peter give to him before
he placed the keys within his care? Surely
the only thing he said was: 'Follow me.'
And Peter and the others never asked
for gold or silver when they chose Matthias
to take the place of the transgressing soul.
Stay as you are, for you are rightly punished;
and guard with care the money got by evil
that made you so audacious against Charles.
And were it not that I am still prevented
by reverence for those exalted keys
that you had held within the happy life,
I'd utter words much heavier than these,
because your avarice afflicts the world:
it tramples on the good, lifts up the wicked.
You, shepherds, the Evangelist had noticed
when he saw her who sits upon the waters
and realized she fornicates with kings,
she who was born with seven heads and had
the power and support of the ten horns,
as long as virtue was her husband's pleasure.
You've made yourselves a god of gold and silver;
how are you different from idolaters,
save that they worship one and you a hundred?
Ah, Constantine, what wickedness was born—
and not from your conversion—from the dower
that you bestowed upon the first rich father!"

Là giù cascherò io altresì quando
verrà colui ch'i' credea che tu fossi,
allor ch'i' feci 'l sùbito dimando.
Ma più è 'l tempo già che i piè mi cossi
e ch'i' son stato così sottosopra,
ch'el non starà piantato coi piè rossi:
ché dopo lui verrà di più laida opra,
di ver' ponente, un pastor sanza legge,
tal che convien che lui e me ricuopra.
Nuovo Iasón sarà, di cui si legge
ne' Maccabei; e come a quel fu molle
suo re, così fia lui chi Francia regge."
Io non so s'i' mi fui qui troppo folle,
ch'i' pur rispuosi lui a questo metro:
"Deh, or mi dì: quanto tesoro volle
Nostro Segnore in prima da san Pietro
ch'ei ponesse le chiavi in sua balìa?
Certo non chiese se non 'Viemmi retro.'
Né Pier né li altri tolsero a Matia
oro od argento, quando fu sortito
al loco che perdé l'anima ria.
Però ti sta, ché tu se' ben punito;
e guarda ben la mal tolta moneta
ch'esser ti fece contra Carlo ardito.
E se non fosse ch'ancor lo mi vieta
la reverenza de le somme chiavi
che tu tenesti ne la vita lieta,
io userei parole ancor più gravi;
ché la vostra avarizia il mondo attrista,
calcando i buoni e sollevando i pravi.
Di voi pastor s'accorse il Vangelista,
quando colei che siede sopra l'acque
puttaneggiar coi regi a lui fu vista;
quella che con le sette teste nacque,
e da le diece corna ebbe argomento,
fin che virtute al suo marito piacque.
Fatto v'avete dio d'oro e d'argento;
e che altro è da voi a l'idolatre,
se non ch'elli uno, e voi ne orate cento?
Ahi, Costantin, di quanto mal fu matre,
non la tua conversion, ma quella dote
che da te prese il primo ricco patre!"

And while I sang such notes to him—whether
it was his indignation or his conscience
that bit him—he kicked hard with both his soles.
I do indeed believe it pleased my guide:
he listened always with such satisfied
expression to the sound of those true words.
And then he gathered me in both his arms
and, when he had me fast against his chest,
where he climbed down before, climbed upward now;
nor did he tire of clasping me until
he brought me to the summit of the arch
that crosses from the fourth to the fifth rampart.
And here he gently set his burden down—
gently because the ridge was rough and steep,
and would have been a rugged pass for goats.
From there another valley lay before me.

E mentr' io li cantava cotai note,
o ira o coscïenza che 'l mordesse,
forte spingava con ambo le piote.
I' credo ben ch'al mio duca piacesse,
con sì contenta labbia sempre attese
lo suon de le parole vere espresse.
Però con ambo le braccia mi prese;
e poi che tutto su mi s'ebbe al petto,
rimontò per la via onde discese.
Né si stancò d'avermi a sé distretto,
sì men portò sovra 'l colmo de l'arco
che dal quarto al quinto argine è tragetto.
Quivi soavemente spuose il carco,
soave per lo scoglio sconcio ed erto
che sarebbe a le capre duro varco.
Indi un altro vallon mi fu scoperto.



XXI·7



DANTE & VIRGIL

CANTO XX

I must make verses of new punishment
and offer matter now for Canto Twenty
of this first canticle—of the submerged.
I was already well prepared to stare
below, into the depth that was disclosed,
where tears of anguished sorrow bathed the ground;
and in the valley's circle I saw souls
advancing, mute and weeping, at the pace
that, in our world, holy processions take.
As I inclined my head still more, I saw
that each, amazingly, appeared contorted
between the chin and where the chest begins;
they had their faces twisted toward their haunches
and found it necessary to walk backward,
because they could not see ahead of them.
Perhaps the force of palsy has so fully
distorted some, but that I've yet to see,
and I do not believe that that can be.
May God so let you, reader, gather fruit
from what you read; and now think for yourself
how I could ever keep my own face dry
when I beheld our image so nearby
and so awry that tears, down from the eyes,
bathed the buttocks, running down the cleft.
Of course I wept, leaning against a rock
along that rugged ridge, so that my guide
told me: "Are you as foolish as the rest?
Here pity only lives when it is dead:
for who can be more impious than he
who links God's judgment to passivity?
Lift, lift your head and see the one for whom
the earth was opened while the Thebans watched,
so that they all cried: 'Amphiaraus,

The Eighth Circle, Fourth Pouch, where Diviners, Astrologers, Magicians, all have their heads turned backward. Amphiaraus. Tiresias. Aruns. Manto. Virgil on the origin of Mantua, his native city. Eurypylus. Michael Scot and other moderns adept at fraud.

Di nova pena mi conven far versi
e dar matera al ventesimo canto
de la prima canzon, ch'è d'i sommersi.
  Io era già disposto tutto quanto
a riguardar ne lo scoperto fondo,
che si bagnava d'angoscioso pianto;
  e vidi gente per lo vallon tondo
venir, tacendo e lagrimando, al passo
che fanno le letane in questo mondo.
  Come 'l viso mi scese in lor più basso,
mirabilmente apparve esser travolto
ciascun tra 'l mento e 'l principio del casso,
  ché da le reni era tornato 'l volto,
e in dietro venir li convenia,
perché 'l veder dinanzi era lor tolto.
  Forse per forza già di parlasia
si travolse così alcun del tutto;
ma io nol vidi, né credo che sia.
  Se Dio ti lasci, lettor, prender frutto
di tua lezione, or pensa per te stesso
com' io potea tener lo viso asciutto,
  quando la nostra imagine di presso
vidi sì torta, che 'l pianto de li occhi
le natiche bagnava per lo fesso.
  Certo io piangea, poggiato a un de' rocchi
del duro scoglio, sì che la mia scorta
mi disse: "Ancor se' tu de li altri sciocchi?
  Qui vive la pietà quand' è ben morta;
chi è più scellerato che colui
che al giudicio divin passion comporta?
  Drizza la testa, drizza, e vedi a cui
s'aperse a li occhi d'i Teban la terra;
per ch'ei gridavan tutti: 'Dove rui,

where are you rushing? Have you quit the fight?'
Nor did he interrupt his downward plunge
to Minos, who lays hands on every sinner.
See how he's made a chest out of his shoulders;
and since he wanted so to see ahead,
he looks behind and walks a backward path.
And see Tiresias, who changed his mien
when from a man he turned into a woman,
so totally transforming all his limbs
that then he had to strike once more upon
the two entwining serpents with his wand
before he had his manly plumes again.
And Aruns is the one who backs against
the belly of Tiresias—Aruns who,
in Luni's hills, tilled by the Carrarese,
who live below, had as his home, a cave
among white marbles, from which he could gaze
at stars and sea with unimpeded view.
And she who covers up her breasts—which you
can't see—with her disheveled locks, who keeps
all of her hairy parts to the far side,
was Manto, who had searched through many lands,
then settled in the place where I was born;
on this, I'd have you hear me now a while.
When Manto's father took his leave of life,
and Bacchus' city found itself enslaved,
she wandered through the world for many years.
High up, in lovely Italy, beneath
the Alps that shut in Germany above
Tirolo, lies a lake known as Benaco.
A thousand springs and more, I think, must flow
out of the waters of that lake to bathe
Pennino, Garda, Val Camonica.
And at its middle is a place where three—
the bishops of Verona, Brescia, Trento—
may bless if they should chance to come that way.
Peschiera, strong and handsome fortress, built
to face the Brescians and the Bergamasques
stands where the circling shore is at its lowest.
There, all the waters that cannot be held
within the bosom of Benaco fall,
to form a river running through green meadows.

Anfïarao? perché lasci la guerra?'
E non restò di ruinare a valle
fino a Minòs che ciascheduno afferra.
Mira c'ha fatto petto de le spalle;
perché volse veder troppo davante,
di retro guarda e fa retroso calle.
Vedi Tiresia, che mutò sembiante
quando di maschio femmina divenne,
cangiandosi le membra tutte quante;
e prima, poi, ribatter li convenne
li duo serpenti avvolti, con la verga,
che rïavesse le maschili penne.
Aronta è quel ch'al ventre li s'atterga,
che ne' monti di Luni, dove ronca
lo Carrarese che di sotto alberga,
ebbe tra ' bianchi marmi la spelonca
per sua dimora; onde a guardar le stelle
e 'l mar non li era la veduta tronca.
E quella che ricuopre le mammelle,
che tu non vedi, con le trecce sciolte,
e ha di là ogne pilosa pelle,
Manto fu, che cercò per terre molte;
poscia si puose là dove nacqu' io;
onde un poco mi piace che m'ascolte.
Poscia che 'l padre suo di vita uscìo
e venne serva la città di Baco,
questa gran tempo per lo mondo gio.
Suso in Italia bella giace un laco,
a piè de l'Alpe che serra Lamagna
sovra Tiralli, c'ha nome Benaco.
Per mille fonti, credo, e più si bagna
tra Garda e Val Camonica e Pennino
de l'acqua che nel detto laco stagna.
Loco è nel mezzo là dove 'l trentino
pastore e quel di Brescia e 'l veronese
segnar poria, s'e' fesse quel cammino.
Siede Peschiera, bello e forte arnese
da fronteggiar Bresciani e Bergamaschi,
ove la riva 'ntorno più discese.
Ivi convien che tutto quanto caschi
ciò che 'n grembo a Benaco star non può,
e fassi fiume giù per verdi paschi.

No sooner has that stream begun to flow
than it is called the Mincio, not Benaco—
until Govèrnolo, where it joins the Po.
It's not flowed far before it finds flat land;
and there it stretches out to form a fen
that in the summer can at times be fetid.
And when she passed that way, the savage virgin
saw land along the middle of the swamp,
untilled and stripped of its inhabitants.
And there, to flee all human intercourse,
she halted with her slaves to ply her arts;
and there she lived, there left her empty body.
And afterward, the people of those parts
collected at that place, because the marsh—
surrounding it on all sides—made it strong.
They built a city over her dead bones;
and after her who first had picked that spot,
they called it Mantua—they cast no lots.
There once were far more people in its walls,
before the foolishness of Casalodi
was tricked by the deceit of Pinamonte.
Therefore, I charge you, if you ever hear
a different tale of my town's origin,
do not let any falsehood gull the truth."
And I: "O master, that which you have spoken
convinces me and so compels my trust
that others' words would only be spent coals.
But tell me if among the passing souls
you see some spirits worthy of our notice,
because my mind is bent on that alone."
Then he to me: "That shade who spreads his beard
down from his cheeks across his swarthy shoulders—
when Greece had been so emptied of its males
that hardly any cradle held a son,
he was an augur; and at Aulis, he
and Calchas set the time to cut the cables.
His name's Eurypylus; a certain passage
of my high tragedy has sung it so;
you know that well enough, who know the whole.
That other there, his flanks extremely spare,
was Michael Scot, a man who certainly
knew how the game of magic fraud was played.

Tosto che l'acqua a correr mette co,
non più Benaco, ma Mencio si chiama
fino a Governol, dove cade in Po.
Non molto ha corso, ch'el trova una lama,
ne la qual si distende e la 'mpaluda;
e suol di state talor esser grama.
Quindi passando la vergine cruda
vide terra, nel mezzo del pantano,
sanza coltura e d'abitanti nuda.
Lì, per fuggire ogne consorzio umano,
ristette con suoi servi a far sue arti,
e visse, e vi lasciò suo corpo vano.
Li uomini poi che 'ntorno erano sparti
s'accolsero a quel loco, ch'era forte
per lo pantan ch'avea da tutte parti.
Fer la città sovra quell' ossa morte;
e per colei che 'l loco prima elesse,
Mantüa l'appellar sanz' altra sorte.
Già fuor le genti sue dentro più spesse,
prima che la mattia da Casalodi
da Pinamonte inganno ricevesse.
Però t'assenno che, se tu mai odi
originar la mia terra altrimenti,
la verità nulla menzogna frodi."
E io: "Maestro, i tuoi ragionamenti
mi son sì certi e prendon sì mia fede,
che li altri mi sarien carboni spenti.
Ma dimmi, de la gente che procede,
se tu ne vedi alcun degno di nota;
ché solo a ciò la mia mente rifiede."
Allor mi disse: "Quel che da la gota
porge la barba in su le spalle brune,
fu—quando Grecia fu di maschi vòta,
sì ch'a pena rimaser per le cune—
augure, e diede 'l punto con Calcanta
in Aulide a tagliar la prima fune.
Euripilo ebbe nome, e così 'l canta
l'alta mia tragedìa in alcun loco:
ben lo sai tu che la sai tutta quanta.
Quell' altro che ne' fianchi è così poco,
Michele Scotto fu, che veramente
de le magiche frode seppe 'l gioco.

See there Guido Bonatti; see Asdente,
who now would wish he had attended to
his cord and leather, but repents too late.
See those sad women who had left their needle,
shuttle, and spindle to become diviners;
they cast their spells with herbs and effigies.
But let us go; Cain with his thorns already
is at the border of both hemispheres
and there, below Seville, touches the sea.
Last night the moon was at its full; you should
be well aware of this, for there were times
when it did you no harm in the deep wood."
These were his words to me; meanwhile we journeyed.

Vedi Guido Bonatti; vedi Asdente,
ch'avere inteso al cuoio e a lo spago
ora vorrebbe, ma tardi si pente.
Vedi le triste che lasciaron l'ago,
la spuola e 'l fuso, e fecersi 'ndivine;
fecer malie con erbe e con imago.
Ma vienne omai, ché già tiene 'l confine
d'amendue li emisperi e tocca l'onda
sotto Sobilia Caino e le spine;
e già iernotte fu la luna tonda:
ben ten de' ricordar, ché non ti nocque
alcuna volta per la selva fonda."
Sì mi parlava, e andavamo introcque.

CANTO XXI

We came along from one bridge to another,
talking of things my Comedy is not
concerned to sing. We held fast to the summit,
then stayed our steps to spy the other cleft
of Malebolge and other vain laments.
I saw that it was wonderfully dark.
As in the arsenal of the Venetians,
all winter long a stew of sticky pitch
boils up to patch their sick and tattered ships
that cannot sail (instead of voyaging,
some build new keels, some tow and tar the ribs
of hulls worn out by too much journeying;
some hammer at the prow, some at the stern,
and some make oars, and some braid ropes and cords;
one mends the jib, another, the mainsail);
so, not by fire but by the art of God,
below there boiled a thick and tarry mass
that covered all the banks with clamminess.
I saw it, but I could not see within it;
no thing was visible but boiling bubbles,
the swelling of the pitch; and then it settled.
And while I watched below attentively,
my guide called out to me: "Take care! Take care!"
And then, from where I stood, he drew me near.
I turned around as one who is impatient
to see what he should shun but is dashed down
beneath the terror he has undergone,
who does not stop his flight and yet would look.
And then in back of us I saw a black
demon as he came racing up the crags.
Ah, he was surely barbarous to see!
And how relentless seemed to me his acts!
His wings were open and his feet were lithe;

The Eighth Circle, Fifth Pouch, with Barrators plunged into boiling pitch and guarded by demons armed with prongs. A newly arrived magistrate from Lucca. Ten demons assigned by Malacoda ("Evil-Tail"), the chief of the Malebranche ("Evil-Claws"), to escort Dante and Virgil. The remarkable signal for their march.

Così di ponte in ponte, altro parlando
che la mia comedìa cantar non cura,
venimmo; e tenavamo 'l colmo, quando
  restammo per veder l'altra fessura
di Malebolge e li altri pianti vani;
e vidila mirabilmente oscura.
  Quale ne l'arzanà de' Viniziani
bolle l'inverno la tenace pece
a rimpalmare i legni lor non sani,
  ché navicar non ponno—in quella vece
chi fa suo legno novo e chi ristoppa
le coste a quel che più vïaggi fece;
  chi ribatte da proda e chi da poppa;
altri fa remi e altri volge sarte;
chi terzeruolo e artimon rintoppa—:
  tal, non per foco ma per divin' arte,
bollia là giuso una pegola spessa,
che 'nviscava la ripa d'ogne parte.
  I' vedea lei, ma non vedëa in essa
mai che le bolle che 'l bollor levava,
e gonfiar tutta, e riseder compressa.
  Mentr' io là giù fisamente mirava,
lo duca mio, dicendo "Guarda, guarda!"
mi trasse a sé del loco dov' io stava.
  Allor mi volsi come l'uom cui tarda
di veder quel che li convien fuggire
e cui paura sùbita sgagliarda,
  che, per veder, non indugia 'l partire:
e vidi dietro a noi un diavol nero
correndo su per lo scoglio venire.
  Ahi quant' elli era ne l'aspetto fero!
e quanto mi parea ne l'atto acerbo,
con l'ali aperte e sovra i piè leggero!

across his shoulder, which was sharp and high,
he had slung a sinner, upward from the thighs;
in front, the demon gripped him by the ankles.
Then from our bridge, he called: "O Malebranche,
I've got an elder of Saint Zita for you!
Shove this one under—I'll go back for more—
his city is well furnished with such stores;
there, everyone's a grafter but Bonturo;
and there—for cash—they'll change a *no* to *yes*."
He threw the sinner down, then wheeled along
the stony cliff: no mastiff's ever been
unleashed with so much haste to chase a thief.
The sinner plunged, then surfaced, black with pitch;
but now the demons, from beneath the bridge,
shouted: "The Sacred Face has no place here;
here we swim differently than in the Serchio;
if you don't want to feel our grappling hooks,
don't try to lift yourself above that ditch."
They pricked him with a hundred prongs and more,
then taunted: "Here one dances under cover,
so try to grab your secret graft below."
The demons did the same as any cook
who has his urchins force the meat with hooks
deep down into the pot, that it not float.
Then my good master said to me: "Don't let
those demons see that you are here; take care
to crouch behind the cover of a crag.
No matter what offense they offer me,
don't be afraid; I know how these things go—
I've had to face such fracases before."
When this was said, he moved beyond the bridgehead.
And on the sixth embankment, he had need
to show his imperturbability.
With the same frenzy, with the brouhaha
of dogs, when they beset a poor wretch who
then stops dead in his tracks as if to beg,
so, from beneath the bridge, the demons rushed
against my guide with all their prongs, but he
called out: "Can't you forget your savagery!
Before you try to maul me, just let one
of all your troop step forward. Hear me out,
and then decide if I am to be hooked."

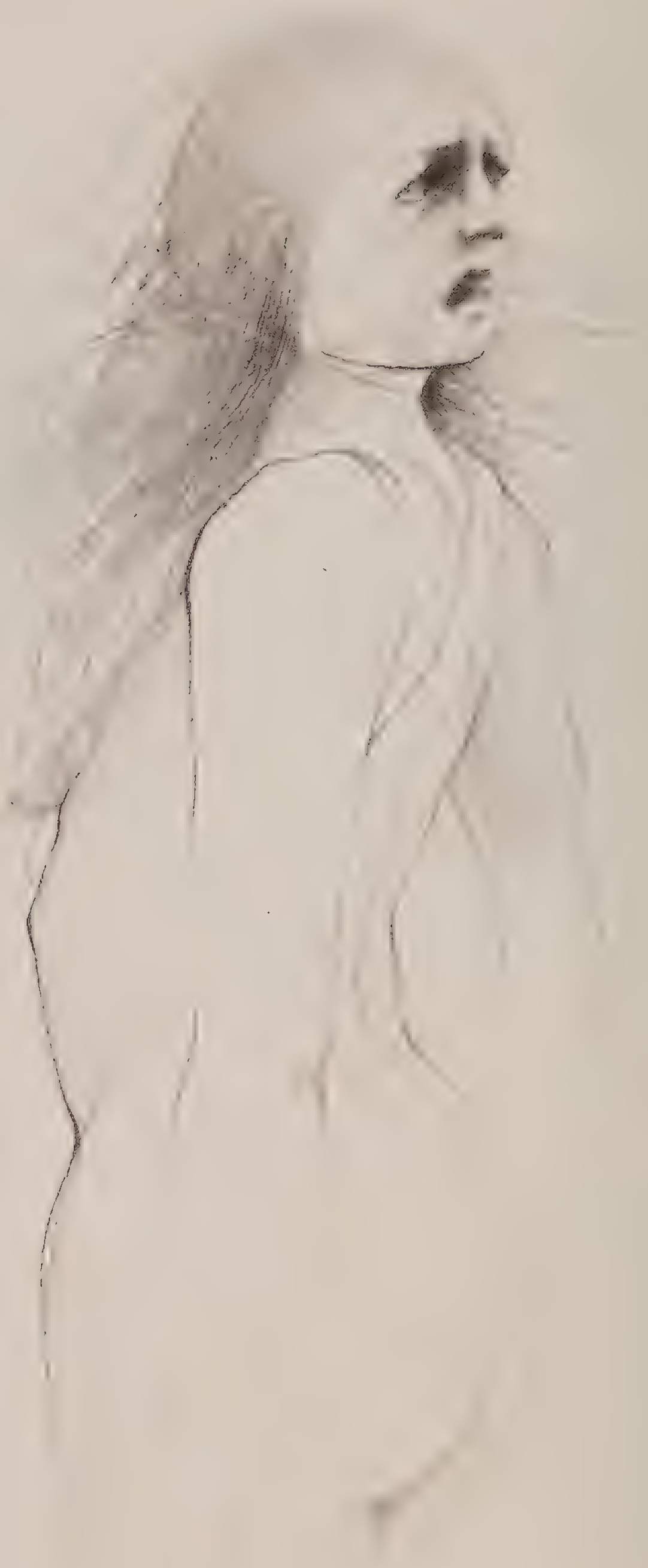
L'omero suo, ch'era aguto e superbo,
carcava un peccator con ambo l'anche,
e quei tenea de' piè ghermito 'l nerbo.
Del nostro ponte disse: "O Malebranche,
ecco un de li anzïan di Santa Zita!
Mettetel sotto, ch'i' torno per anche
a quella terra, che n'è ben fornita:
ogn' uom v'è barattier, fuor che Bonturo;
del no, per li denar, vi si fa *ita*."
Là giù 'l buttò, e per lo scoglio duro
si volse; e mai non fu mastino sciolto
con tanta fretta a seguitar lo furo.
Quel s'attuffò, e tornò sù convolto;
ma i demon che del ponte avean coperchio,
gridar: "Qui non ha loco il Santo Volto!
qui si nuota altrimenti che nel Serchio!
Però, se tu non vuo' di nostri graffi,
non far sopra la pegola soverchio."
Poi l'addentar con più di cento raffi,
disser: "Coverto convien che qui balli,
sì che, se puoi, nascosamente accaffi."
Non altrimenti i cuoci a' lor vassalli
fanno attuffare in mezzo la caldaia
la carne con li uncin, perché non galli.
Lo buon maestro "Acciò che non si paia
che tu ci sia," mi disse, "giù t'acquatta
dopo uno scheggio, ch'alcun schermo t'aia;
e per nulla offension che mi sia fatta,
non temer tu, ch'i' ho le cose conte,
per ch'altra volta fui a tal baratta."
Poscia passò di là dal co del ponte;
e com' el giunse in su la ripa sesta,
mestier li fu d'aver sicura fronte.
Con quel furore e con quella tempesta
ch'escono i cani a dosso al poverello
che di sùbito chiede ove s'arresta,
usciron quei di sotto al ponticello,
e volser contra lui tutt' i runcigli;
ma el gridò: "Nessun di voi sia fello!
Innanzi che l'uncin vostro mi pigli,
traggasi avante l'un di voi che m'oda,
e poi d'arruncigliarmi si consigli."

At this they howled, "Let Malacoda go!"
And one of them moved up—the others stayed—
and as he came, he asked: "How can he win?"
"O Malacoda, do you think I've come,"
my master answered him, "already armed—
as you can see—against your obstacles,
without the will of God and helpful fate?
Let us move on; it is the will of Heaven
for me to show this wild way to another."
At this the pride of Malacoda fell;
his prong dropped to his feet. He told his fellows:
"Since that's the way things stand, let us not wound him."
My guide then spoke to me: "O you, who crouch,
bent low among the bridge's splintered rocks,
you can feel safe—and now return to me."
At this I moved and quickly came to him.
The devils had edged forward, all of them;
I feared that they might fail to keep their word:
just so, I saw the infantry when they
marched out, under safe conduct, from Caprona;
they trembled when they passed their enemies.
My body huddled closer to my guide;
I did not let the demons out of sight;
the looks they cast at us were less than kind.
They bent their hooks and shouted to each other:
"And shall I give it to him on the rump?"
And all of them replied, "Yes, let him have it!"
But Malacoda, still in conversation
with my good guide, turned quickly to his squadron
and said: "Be still, Scarmiglione, still!"
To us he said: "There is no use in going
much farther on this ridge, because the sixth
bridge—at the bottom there—is smashed to bits.
Yet if you two still want to go ahead,
move up and walk along this rocky edge;
nearby, another ridge will form a path.
Five hours from this hour yesterday,
one thousand and two hundred sixty-six
years passed since that roadway was shattered here.
I'm sending ten of mine out there to see
if any sinner lifts his head for air;
go with my men—there is no malice in them."

Tutti gridaron: "Vada Malacoda!";
per ch'un si mosse—e li altri stetter fermi—
e venne a lui dicendo: "Che li approda?"
"Credi tu, Malacoda, qui vedermi
esser venuto," disse 'l mio maestro,
"sicuro già da tutti vostri schermi,
sanza voler divino e fato destro?
Lascian' andar, ché nel cielo è voluto
ch'i' mostri altrui questo cammin silvestro."
Allor li fu l'orgoglio sì caduto,
ch'e' si lasciò cascar l'uncino a' piedi,
e disse a li altri: "Omai non sia feruto."
E 'l duca mio a me: "O tu che siedi
tra li scheggion del ponte quatto quatto,
sicuramente omai a me ti riedi."
Per ch'io mi mossi e a lui venni ratto;
e i diavoli si fecer tutti avanti,
sì ch'io temetti ch'ei tenesser patto;
così vid' ïo già temer li fanti
ch'uscivan patteggiati di Caprona,
veggendo sé tra nemici cotanti.
I' m'accostai con tutta la persona
lungo 'l mio duca, e non torceva li occhi
da la sembianza lor ch'era non buona.
Ei chinavan li raffi e "Vuo' che 'l tocchi,"
diceva l'un con l'altro, "in sul groppone?"
E rispondien: "Sì, fa che gliel' accocchi."
Ma quel demonio che tenea sermone
col duca mio, si volse tutto presto
e disse: "Posa, posa, Scarmiglione!"
Poi disse a noi: "Più oltre andar per questo
iscoglio non si può, però che giace
tutto spezzato al fondo l'arco sesto.
E se l'andare avante pur vi piace,
andatevene su per questa grotta;
presso è un altro scoglio che via face.
Ier, più oltre cinqu' ore che quest' otta,
mille dugento con sessanta sei
anni compié che qui la via fu rotta.
Io mando verso là di questi miei
a riguardar s'alcun se ne sciorina;
gite con lor, che non saranno rei."

"Step forward, Alichino and Calcabrina,"
he then began to say, "and you, Cagnazzo;
and Barbariccia, who can lead the ten.
Let Libicocco go, and Draghignazzo
and tusky Ciriatto and Graffiacane
and Farfarello and mad Rubicante.
Search all around the clammy stew of pitch;
keep these two safe and sound till the next ridge
that rises without break across the dens."
"Ah me! What is this, master, that I see?"
I said. "Can't we do without company?
If you know how to go, I want no escort.
If you are just as keen as usual,
can't you see how those demons grind their teeth?
Their brows are menacing, they promise trouble."
And he to me: "I do not want you frightened:
just let them gnash away as they may wish;
they do it for the wretches boiled in pitch."
They turned around along the left hand bank:
but first each pressed his tongue between his teeth
as signal for their leader, Barbariccia.
And he had made a trumpet of his ass.

"Tra'ti avante, Alichino, e Calcabrina,"
cominciò elli a dire, "e tu, Cagnazzo;
e Barbariccia guidi la decina.
Libicocco vegn' oltre e Draghignazzo,
Cirïatto sannuto e Graffiacane
e Farfarello e Rubicante pazzo.
Cercate 'ntorno le boglienti pane;
costor sian salvi infino a l'altro scheggio
che tutto intero va sovra le tane."
"Omè, maestro, che è quel ch'i' veggio?"
diss' io, "deh, sanza scorta andianci soli,
se tu sa' ir; ch'i' per me non la cheggio.
Se tu se' sì accorto come suoli,
non vedi tu ch'e digrignan li denti
e con le ciglia ne minaccian duoli?"
Ed elli a me: "Non vo' che tu paventi;
lasciali digrignar pur a lor senno,
ch'e' fanno ciò per li lessi dolenti."
Per l'argine sinistro volta dienno;
ma prima avea ciascun la lingua stretta
coi denti, verso lor duca, per cenno;
ed elli avea del cul fatto trombetta.



XX·52

SCARMIGLIONE



BARBARICCIA



CANTO XXII

Before this I've seen horsemen start to march
and open the assault and muster ranks
and seen them, too, at times beat their retreat;
and on your land, o Aretines, I've seen
rangers and raiding parties galloping,
the clash of tournaments, the rush of jousts,
now done with trumpets, now with bells, and now
with drums, and now with signs from castle walls,
with native things and with imported ware;
but never yet have I seen horsemen or
seen infantry or ship that sails by signal
of land or star move to so strange a bugle!
We made our way together with ten demons:
ah, what ferocious company! And yet
"in church with saints, with rotters in the tavern."
But I was all intent upon the pitch,
to seek out every feature of the pouch
and of the people who were burning in it.
Just as the dolphins do, when with arched back,
they signal to the seamen to prepare
for tempest, that their vessel may be spared,
so here from time to time, to ease his torment,
some sinner showed his back above the surface,
then hid more quickly than a lightning flash.
And just as on the margin of a ditch,
frogs crouch, their snouts alone above the water,
so as to hide their feet and their plump flesh,
so here on every side these sinners crouched;
but faster than a flash, when Barbariccia
drew near, they plunged beneath the boiling pitch.
I saw—my heart still shudders in recall—
one who delayed, just as at times a frog
is left behind while others dive below;

Still the Eighth Circle, Fifth Pouch: the Barrators. The Barrator from Navarre. Fra Gomita and Michele Zanche, two Sardinians. The astuteness of the Navarrese that leads two demons to fall into the pitch.

Io vidi già cavalier muover campo,
e cominciare stormo e far lor mostra,
e talvolta partir per loro scampo;
corridor vidi per la terra vostra,
o Aretini, e vidi gir gualdane,
fedir torneamenti e correr giostra;
quando con trombe, e quando con campane,
con tamburi e con cenni di castella,
e con cose nostrali e con istrane;
né già con sì diversa cennamella
cavalier vidi muover né pedoni,
né nave a segno di terra o di stella.
Noi andavam con li diece demoni.
Ahi fiera compagnia! ma ne la chiesa
coi santi, e in taverna coi ghiottoni.
Pur a la pegola era la mia 'ntesa,
per veder de la bolgia ogne contegno
e de la gente ch'entro v'era incesa.
Come i dalfini, quando fanno segno
a' marinar con l'arco de la schiena
che s'argomentin di campar lor legno,
talor così, ad alleggiar la pena,
mostrav' alcun de' peccatori 'l dosso
e nascondea in men che non balena.
E come a l'orlo de l'acqua d'un fosso
stanno i ranocchi pur col muso fuori,
sì che celano i piedi e l'altro grosso,
sì stavan d'ogne parte i peccatori;
ma come s'appressava Barbariccia,
così si ritraén sotto i bollori.
I' vidi, e anco il cor me n'accapriccia,
uno aspettar così, com' elli 'ncontra
ch'una rana rimane e l'altra spiccia;

and Graffiacane, who was closest to him,
then hooked him by his pitch-entangled locks
and hauled him up; he seemed to me an otter.
By now I knew the names of all those demons—
I'd paid attention when the fiends were chosen;
I'd watched as they stepped forward one by one.
"O Rubicante, see you set your talons
right into him, so you can flay his flesh!"
So did those cursed ones cry out together.
And I: "My master, if you can, find out
what is the name of that unfortunate
who's fallen victim to his enemies."
My guide, who then drew near that sinner's side,
asked him to tell his birthplace. He replied:
"My homeland was the kingdom of Navarre.
My mother, who had had me by a wastrel,
destroyer of himself and his possessions,
had placed me in the service of a lord.
Then I was in the household of the worthy
King Thibault; there I started taking graft;
with this heat I pay reckoning for that."
And Ciriatto, from whose mouth there bulged
to right and left two tusks like a wild hog's,
then let him feel how one of them could mangle.
The mouse had fallen in with evil cats;
but Barbariccia clasped him in his arms
and said: "Stand off there, while I fork him fast."
And turning toward my master then, he said:
"Ask on, if you would learn some more from him
before one of the others does him in."
At which my guide: "Now tell: among the sinners
who hide beneath the pitch, are any others
Italian?" And he: "I have just left
one who was nearby there; and would I were
still covered by the pitch as he is hidden,
for then I'd have no fear of hook or talon."
And Libicocco said, "We've been too patient!"
and, with his grapple, grabbed him by the arm
and, ripping, carried off a hunk of flesh.
But Draghignazzo also looked as if
to grab his legs; at which, their captain wheeled
and threatened all of them with raging looks.

e Graffiacan, che li era più di contra,
li arrunciglió le 'mpegolate chiome
e trassel sù, che mi parve una lontra.
I' sapea già di tutti quanti 'l nome,
sì li notai quando fuorono eletti,
e poi ch'e' si chiamaro, attesi come.
"O Rubicante, fa che tu li metti
li unghioni a dosso, sì che tu lo scuoi!"
gridavan tutti insieme i maladetti.
E io: "Maestro mio, fa, se tu puoi,
che tu sappi chi è lo sciagurato
venuto a man de li avversari suoi."
Lo duca mio li s'accostò allato;
domandollo ond' ei fosse, e quei rispuose:
"I' fui del regno di Navarra nato.
Mia madre a servo d'un segnor mi puose,
che m'avea generato d'un ribaldo,
distruggitor di sé e di sue cose.
Poi fui famiglia del buon re Tebaldo;
quivi mi misi a far baratteria,
di ch'io rendo ragione in questo caldo."
E Cirïatto, a cui di bocca uscia
d'ogne parte una sanna come a porco,
li fé sentir come l'una sdruscia.
Tra male gatte era venuto 'l sorco;
ma Barbariccia il chiuse con le braccia
e disse: "State in là, mentr' io lo 'nforco."
E al maestro mio volse la faccia;
"Domanda," disse, "ancor, se più disii
saper da lui, prima ch'altri 'l disfaccia."
Lo duca dunque: "Or dì: de li altri rii
conosci tu alcun che sia latino
sotto la pece?" E quelli: "I' mi partii,
poco è, da un che fu di là vicino.
Così foss' io ancor con lui coperto,
ch'i' non temerei unghia né uncino!"
E Libicocco "Troppo avem sofferto,"
disse; e preseli 'l braccio col runciglio,
sì che, stracciando, ne portò un lacerto.
Draghignazzo anco i volle dar di piglio
giuso a le gambe; onde 'l decurio loro
si volse intorno intorno con mal piglio.

When they'd grown somewhat less tumultuous,
without delay my guide asked of that one
who had his eyes still fixed upon his wound:
"Who was the one you left to come ashore—
unluckily—as you just said before?"
He answered: "Fra Gomita of Gallura,
who was a vessel fit for every fraud;
he had his master's enemies in hand,
but handled them in ways that pleased them all.
He took their gold and smoothly let them off,
as he himself says; and in other matters,
he was a sovereign, not a petty, swindler.
His comrade there is Don Michele Zanche
of Logodoro; and their tongues are never
too tired to talk of their Sardinia.
Ah me, see that one there who grinds his teeth!
If I were not afraid, I'd speak some more,
but he is getting set to scratch my scurf."
And their great marshal, facing Farfarello—
who was so hot to strike he rolled his eyes,
said: "Get away from there, you filthy bird!"
"If you perhaps would like to see or hear,"
that sinner, terrified, began again,
"Lombards or Tuscans, I can fetch you some;
but let the Malebranche stand aside
so that my comrades need not fear their vengeance.
Remaining in this very spot, I shall,
although alone, make seven more appear
when I have whistled, as has been our custom
when one of us has managed to get out."
At that, Cagnazzo lifted up his snout
and shook his head, and said: "Just listen to
that trick by which he thinks he can dive back!"
To this, he who was rich in artifice
replied: "Then I must have too many tricks,
if I bring greater torment to my friends."
This was too much for Alichino and,
despite the others, he cried out: "If you
dive back, I shall not gallop after you
but beat my wings above the pitch; we'll leave
this height; with the embankment as a screen,
we'll see if you—alone—can handle us."

Quand' elli un poco rappaciati fuoro,
a lui, ch'ancor mirava sua ferita,
domandò 'l duca mio sanza dimoro:
"Chi fu colui da cui mala partita
di' che facesti per venire a proda?"
Ed ei rispuose: "Fu frate Gomita,
quel di Gallura, vasel d'ogne froda,
ch'ebbe i nemici di suo donno in mano,
e fé sì lor, che ciascun se ne loda.
Danar si tolse e lasciolli di piano,
sì com' e' dice; e ne li altri offici anche
barattier fu non picciol, ma sovrano.
Usa con esso donno Michel Zanche
di Logodoro; e a dir di Sardigna
le lingue lor non si sentono stanche.
Omè, vedete l'altro che digrigna;
i' direi anche, ma i' temo ch'ello
non s'apparecchi a grattarmi la tigna."
E 'l gran proposto, vòlto a Farfarello
che stralunava li occhi per fedire,
disse: "Fatti 'n costà, malvagio uccello!"
"Se voi volete vedere o udire,"
ricominciò lo spaürato appresso,
"Toschi o Lombardi, io ne farò venire;
ma stieno i Malebranche un poco in cesso,
sì ch'ei non teman de le lor vendette;
e io, seggendo in questo loco stesso,
per un ch'io son, ne farò venir sette
quand' io suffolerò, com' è nostro uso
di fare allor che fori alcun si mette."
Cagnazzo a cotal motto levò 'l muso,
crollando 'l capo, e disse: "Odi malizia
ch'elli ha pensata per gittarsi giuso!"
Ond' ei, ch'avea lacciuoli a gran divizia,
rispuose: "Malizioso son io troppo,
quand' io procuro a' mia maggior trestizia."
Alichin non si tenne e, di rintoppo
a li altri, disse a lui: "Se tu ti cali,
io non ti verrò dietro di gualoppo,
ma batterò sovra la pece l'ali.
Lascisi 'l collo, e sia la ripa scudo,
a veder se tu sol più di noi vali."

O you who read, hear now of this new sport:
each turned his eyes upon the other shore,
he first who'd been most hesitant before.
The Navarrese, in nick of time, had planted
his feet upon the ground; then in an instant
he jumped and freed himself from their commander.
At this each demon felt the prick of guilt,
and most, he who had led his band to blunder;
so he took off and shouted: "You are caught!"
But this could help him little; wings were not
more fast than fear; the sinner plunged right under;
the other, flying up, lifted his chest:
not otherwise the wild duck when it plunges
precipitously, when the falcon nears
and then—exhausted, thwarted—flies back up.
But Calcabrina, raging at the trick,
flew after Alichino; he was keen
to see the sinner free and have a brawl;
and once the Navarrese had disappeared,
he turned his talons on his fellow demon
and tangled with him just above the ditch.
But Alichino clawed him well—he was
indeed a full-grown kestrel; and both fell
into the middle of the boiling pond.
The heat was quick to disentangle them,
but still there was no way they could get out;
their wings were stuck, enmeshed in glue-like pitch.
And Barbariccia, grieving with the rest,
sent four to fly out toward the other shore
with all their forks, and speedily enough
on this side and on that they took their posts;
and toward those two—stuck fast, already cooked
beneath that crust—they stretched their grappling hooks.
We left them still contending with that mess.

O tu che leggi, udirai nuovo ludo:
ciascun da l'altra costa li occhi volse,
quel prima, ch'a ciò fare era più crudo.
Lo Navarrese ben suo tempo colse;
fermò le piante a terra, e in un punto
saltò e dal proposto lor si sciolse.
Di che ciascun di colpa fu compunto,
ma quei più che cagion fu del difetto;
però si mosse e gridò: "Tu se' giunto!"
Ma poco i valse: ché l'ali al sospetto
non potero avanzar; quelli andò sotto,
e quei drizzò volando suso il petto:
non altrimenti l'anitra di botto,
quando 'l falcon s'appressa, giù s'attuffa,
ed ei ritorna sù crucciato e rotto.
Irato Calcabrina de la buffa,
volando dietro li tenne, invaghito
che quei campasse per aver la zuffa;
e come 'l barattier fu disparito,
così volse li artigli al suo compagno,
e fu con lui sopra 'l fosso ghermito.
Ma l'altro fu bene sparvier grifagno
ad artigliar ben lui, e amendue
cadder nel mezzo del bogliente stagno.
Lo caldo sghermitor sùbito fue;
ma però di levarsi era neente,
sì avieno inviscate l'ali sue.
Barbariccia, con li altri suoi dolente,
quattro ne fé volar da l'altra costa
con tutt' i raffi, e assai prestamente
di qua, di là discesero a la posta;
porser li uncini verso li 'mpaniati,
ch'eran già cotti dentro da la crosta.
E noi lasciammo lor così 'mpacciati.

CANTO XXIII

Silent, alone, no one escorting us,
we made our way—one went before, one after—
as Friars Minor when they walk together.
The present fracas made me think of Aesop—
that fable where he tells about the mouse
and frog; for "near" and "nigh" are not more close
than are that fable and this incident,
if you compare attentively the end
of one with the beginning of the second.
And even as one thought springs from another,
so out of that was still another born,
which made the fear I felt before redouble.
I thought: "Because of us, they have been mocked,
and this inflicted so much hurt and scorn
that I am sure they feel deep indignation.
If anger's to be added to their malice,
they'll hunt us down with more ferocity
than any hound whose teeth have trapped a hare."
I could already feel my hair curl up
from fear, and I looked back attentively,
while saying: "Master, if you don't conceal
yourself and me at once—they terrify me,
those Malebranche; they are after us;
I so imagine them, I hear them now."
And he to me: "Were I a leaded mirror,
I could not gather in your outer image
more quickly than I have received your inner.
For even now your thoughts have joined my own;
in both our acts and aspects we are kin—
with both our minds I've come to one decision.
If that right bank is not extremely steep,
we can descend into the other moat
and so escape from the imagined chase."

Still the Eighth Circle, Fifth Pouch: the Barrators. Pursuit by the demons, with Virgil snatching up Dante and sliding down to the Sixth Pouch, where the Hypocrites file along slowly, clothed in caps of lead. Two Jovial Friars of Bologna, Catalano and Loderingo. Caiaphas. Virgil's distress at Malacoda's deceitfulness.

Taciti, soli, sanza compagnia
n'andavam l'un dinanzi e l'altro dopo,
come frati minor vanno per via.
Vòlt' era in su la favola d'Isopo
lo mio pensier per la presente rissa,
dov' el parlò de la rana e del topo;
ché più non si pareggia "mo" e "issa"
che l'un con l'altro fa, se ben s'accoppia
principio e fine con la mente fissa.
E come l'un pensier de l'altro scoppia,
così nacque di quello un altro poi,
che la prima paura mi fé doppia.
Io pensava così: "Questi per noi
sono scherniti con danno e con beffa
sì fatta, ch'assai credo che lor nòi.
Se l'ira sovra 'l mal voler s'aggueffa,
ei ne verranno dietro più crudeli
che 'l cane a quella lievre ch'elli acceffa."
Già mi sentia tutti arricciar li peli
de la paura e stava in dietro intento,
quand' io dissi: "Maestro, se non celi
te e me tostamente, i' ho pavento
d'i Malebranche. Noi li avem già dietro;
io li 'magino sì, che già li sento."
E quei: "S'i' fossi di piombato vetro,
l'imagine di fuor tua non trarrei
più tosto a me, che quella dentro 'mpetro.
Pur mo venieno i tuo' pensier tra ' miei,
con simile atto e con simile faccia,
sì che d'intrambi un sol consiglio fei.
S'elli è che sì la destra costa giaccia,
che noi possiam ne l'altra bolgia scendere,
noi fuggirem l'imaginata caccia."

He'd hardly finished telling me his plan
when I saw them approach with outstretched wings,
not too far off, and keen on taking us.
My guide snatched me up instantly, just as
the mother who is wakened by a roar
and catches sight of blazing flames beside her,
will lift her son and run without a stop—
she cares more for the child than for herself—
not pausing even to throw on a shift;
and down the hard embankment's edge—his back
lay flat along the sloping rock that closes
one side of the adjacent moat—he slid.
No water ever ran so fast along
a sluice to turn the wheels of a land mill,
not even when its flow approached the paddles,
as did my master race down that embankment
while bearing me with him upon his chest,
just like a son, and not like a companion.
His feet had scarcely reached the bed that lies
along the deep below, than those ten demons
were on the edge above us; but there was
nothing to fear; for that High Providence
that willed them ministers of the fifth ditch,
denies to all of them the power to leave it.
Below that point we found a painted people,
who moved about with lagging steps, in circles,
weeping, with features tired and defeated.
And they were dressed in cloaks with cowls so low
they fell before their eyes, of that same cut
that's used to make the clothes for Cluny's monks.
Outside, these cloaks were gilded and they dazzled;
but inside they were all of lead, so heavy
that Frederick's capes were straw compared to them.
A tiring mantle for eternity!
We turned again, as always, to the left,
along with them, intent on their sad weeping;
but with their weights that weary people paced
so slowly that we found ourselves among
new company each time we took a step.
At which I told my guide: "Please try to find
someone whose name or deed I recognize;
and while we walk, be watchful with your eyes."

Già non compié di tal consiglio rendere,
ch'io li vidi venir con l'ali tese
non molto lungi, per volerne prendere.
Lo duca mio di sùbito mi prese,
come la madre ch'al romore è desta
e vede presso a sé le fiamme accese,
che prende il figlio e fugge e non s'arresta,
avendo più di lui che di sé cura,
tanto che solo una camiscia vesta;
e giù dal collo de la ripa dura
supin si diede a la pendente roccia,
che l'un de' lati a l'altra bolgia tura.
Non corse mai sì tosto acqua per doccia
a volger ruota di molin terragno,
quand' ella più verso le pale approccia,
come 'l maestro mio per quel vivagno,
portandosene me sovra 'l suo petto,
come suo figlio, non come compagno.
A pena fuoro i piè suoi giunti al letto
del fondo giù, ch'e' furon in sul colle
sovresso noi; ma non lì era sospetto:
ché l'alta provedenza che lor volle
porre ministri de la fossa quinta,
poder di partirs' indi a tutti tolle.
Là giù trovammo una gente dipinta
che giva intorno assai con lenti passi,
piangendo e nel sembiante stanca e vinta.
Elli avean cappe con cappucci bassi
dinanzi a li occhi, fatte de la taglia
che in Clugnì per li monaci fassi.
Di fuor dorate son, sì ch'elli abbaglia;
ma dentro tutte piombo, e gravi tanto,
che Federigo le mettea di paglia.
Oh in etterno faticoso manto!
Noi ci volgemmo ancor pur a man manca
con loro insieme, intenti al tristo pianto;
ma per lo peso quella gente stanca
venìa sì pian, che noi eravam nuovi
di compagnia ad ogne mover d'anca.
Per ch'io al duca mio: "Fa che tu trovi
alcun ch'al fatto o al nome si conosca,
e li occhi, sì andando, intorno movi."

And one who'd taken in my Tuscan speech
cried out behind us: "Stay your steps, o you
who hurry so along this darkened air!
Perhaps you'll have from me that which you seek."
At which my guide turned to me, saying: "Wait,
and then continue, following his pace."
I stopped, and I saw two whose faces showed
their minds were keen to be with me; but both
their load and the tight path forced them to slow.
When they came up, they looked askance at me
a long while, and they uttered not a word
until they turned to one another, saying:
"The throbbing of his throat makes this one seem
alive; and if they're dead, what privilege
lets them appear without the heavy mantle?"
Then they addressed me: "Tuscan, you who come
to this assembly of sad hypocrites,
do not disdain to tell us who you are."
I answered: "Where the lovely Arno flows,
there I was born and raised, in the great city;
I'm with the body I have always had.
But who are you, upon whose cheeks I see
such tears distilled by grief? And let me know
what punishment it is that glitters so."
And one of them replied: "The yellow cloaks
are of a lead so thick, their heaviness
makes us, the balances beneath them, creak.
We both were Jovial Friars, and Bolognese;
my name was Catalano, Loderingo
was his, and we were chosen by your city
together, for the post that's usually
one man's, to keep the peace; and what we were
is still to be observed around Gardingo."
I then began, "O Friars, your misdeeds . . ."
but said no more, because my eyes had caught
one crucified by three stakes on the ground.
When he saw me, that sinner writhed all over,
and he breathed hard into his beard with sighs;
observing that, Fra Catalano said
to me: "That one impaled there, whom you see,
counseled the Pharisees that it was prudent
to let one man—and not one nation—suffer.

E un che 'ntese la parola tosca,
di retro a noi gridò: "Tenete i piedi,
voi che correte sì per l'aura fosca!
Forse ch'avrai da me quel che tu chiedi."
Onde 'l duca si volse e disse: "Aspetta,
e poi secondo il suo passo procedi."
Ristetti, e vidi due mostrar gran fretta
de l'animo, col viso, d'esser meco;
ma tardavali 'l carco e la via stretta.
Quando fuor giunti, assai con l'occhio bieco
mi rimiraron sanza far parola;
poi si volsero in sé, e dicean seco:
"Costui par vivo a l'atto de la gola;
e s'e' son morti, per qual privilegio
vanno scoperti de la grave stola?"
Poi disser me: "O Tosco, ch'al collegio
de l'ipocriti tristi se' venuto,
dir chi tu se' non avere in dispregio."
E io a loro: "I' fui nato e cresciuto
sovra 'l bel fiume d'Arno a la gran villa,
e son col corpo ch'i' ho sempre avuto.
Ma voi chi siete, a cui tanto distilla
quant' i' veggio dolor giù per le guance?
e che pena è in voi che sì sfavilla?"
E l'un rispuose a me: "Le cappe rance
son di piombo sì grosse, che li pesi
fan così cigolar le lor bilance.
Frati godenti fummo, e bolognesi;
io Catalano e questi Loderingo
nomati, e da tua terra insieme presi
come suole esser tolto un uom solingo,
per conservar sua pace; e fummo tali,
ch'ancor si pare intorno dal Gardingo."
Io cominciai: "O frati, i vostri mali . . .";
ma più non dissi, ch'a l'occhio mi corse
un, crucifisso in terra con tre pali.
Quando mi vide, tutto si distorse,
soffiando ne la barba con sospiri;
e 'l frate Catalan, ch'a ciò s'accorse,
mi disse: "Quel confitto che tu miri,
consigliò i Farisei che convenia
porre un uom per lo popolo a' martìri.

Naked, he has been stretched across the path,
as you can see, and he must feel the weight
of anyone who passes over him.
Like torment, in this ditch, afflicts both his
father-in-law and others in that council,
which for the Jews has seeded so much evil."
Then I saw Virgil stand amazed above
that one who lay stretched out upon a cross
so squalidly in his eternal exile.
And he addressed the friar in this way:
"If it does not displease you—if you may—
tell us if there's some passage on the right
that would allow the two of us to leave
without our having to compel black angels
to travel to this deep, to get us out."
He answered: "Closer than you hope, you'll find
a rocky ridge that stretches from the great
round wall and crosses all the savage valleys,
except that here it's broken—not a bridge.
But where its ruins slope along the bank
and heap up at the bottom, you can climb."
My leader stood awhile with his head bent,
then said: "He who hooks sinners over there
gave us a false account of this affair."
At which the Friar: "In Bologna, I
once heard about the devil's many vices—
they said he was a liar and father of lies."
And then my guide moved on with giant strides,
somewhat disturbed, with anger in his eyes;
at this I left those overburdened spirits,
while following the prints of his dear feet.

Attraversato è, nudo, ne la via,
come tu vedi, ed è mestier ch'el senta
qualunque passa, come pesa, pria.
E a tal modo il socero si stenta
in questa fossa, e li altri dal concilio
che fu per li Giudei mala sementa."
Allor vid' io maravigliar Virgilio
sovra colui ch'era disteso in croce
tanto vilmente ne l'etterno essilio.
Poscia drizzò al frate cotal voce:
"Non vi dispiaccia, se vi lece, dirci
s'a la man destra giace alcuna foce
onde noi amendue possiamo uscirci,
sanza costrigner de li angeli neri
che vegnan d'esto fondo a dipartirci."
Rispuose adunque: "Più che tu non speri
s'appressa un sasso che da la gran cerchia
si move e varca tutt' i vallon feri,
salvo che 'n questo è rotto e nol coperchia;
montar potrete su per la ruina,
che giace in costa e nel fondo soperchia."
Lo duca stette un poco a testa china;
poi disse: "Mal contava la bisogna
colui che i peccator di qua uncina."
E 'l frate: "Io udi' già dire a Bologna
del diavol vizi assai, tra ' quali udi'
ch'elli è bugiardo e padre di menzogna."
Appresso il duca a gran passi sen gì,
turbato un poco d'ira nel sembiante;
ond' io da li 'ncarcati mi parti'
dietro a le poste de le care piante.

C A I A P H A S





VANNI FUCCI

CANTO XXIV

In that part of the young year when the sun
begins to warm its locks beneath Aquarius
and nights grow shorter, equaling the days,
when hoarfrost mimes the image of his white
sister upon the ground—but not for long,
because the pen he uses is not sharp—
the farmer who is short of fodder rises
and looks and sees the fields all white, at which
he slaps his thigh, turns back into the house,
and here and there complains like some poor wretch
who doesn't know what can be done, and then
goes out again and gathers up new hope
on seeing that the world has changed its face
in so few hours, and he takes his staff
and hurries out his flock of sheep to pasture.
So did my master fill me with dismay
when I saw how his brow was deeply troubled,
yet then the plaster soothed the sore as quickly;
for soon as we were on the broken bridge,
my guide turned back to me with that sweet manner
I first had seen along the mountain's base.
And he examined carefully the ruin;
then having picked the way we would ascend,
he opened up his arms and thrust me forward.
And just as he who ponders as he labors,
who's always ready for the step ahead,
so, as he lifted me up toward the summit
of one great crag, he'd see another spur,
saying: "That is the one you will grip next,
but try it first to see if it is firm."
That was no path for those with cloaks of lead,
for he and I—he, light; I, with support—
could hardly make it up from spur to spur.

Still the Eighth Circle, Sixth Pouch: the Hypocrites. Hard passage to the Seventh Pouch: the Thieves. Bitten by a serpent, a thieving sinner who turns to ashes and is then restored: Vanni Fucci. His prediction of the defeat of the Whites—Dante's party —at Pistoia.

In quella parte del giovanetto anno
che 'l sole i crin sotto l'Aquario tempra
e già le notti al mezzo dì sen vanno,
quando la brina in su la terra assempra
l'imagine di sua sorella bianca,
ma poco dura a la sua penna tempra,
lo villanello a cui la roba manca,
si leva, e guarda, e vede la campagna
biancheggiar tutta; ond' ei si batte l'anca,
ritorna in casa, e qua e là si lagna,
come 'l tapin che non sa che si faccia;
poi riede, e la speranza ringavagna,
veggendo 'l mondo aver cangiata faccia
in poco d'ora, e prende suo vincastro
e fuor le pecorelle a pascer caccia.
Così mi fece sbigottir lo mastro
quand' io li vidi sì turbar la fronte,
e così tosto al mal giunse lo 'mpiastro;
ché, come noi venimmo al guasto ponte,
lo duca a me si volse con quel piglio
dolce ch'io vidi prima a piè del monte.
Le braccia aperse, dopo alcun consiglio
eletto seco riguardando prima
ben la ruina, e diedemi di piglio.
E come quei ch'adopera ed estima,
che sempre par che 'nnanzi si proveggia,
così, levando me sù ver' la cima
d'un ronchione, avvisava un'altra scheggia
dicendo: "Sovra quella poi t'aggrappa;
ma tenta pria s'è tal ch'ella ti reggia."
Non era via da vestito di cappa,
ché noi a pena, ei lieve e io sospinto,
potavam sù montar di chiappa in chiappa.

And were it not that, down from this enclosure,
the slope was shorter than the bank before,
I cannot speak for him, but I should surely
have been defeated. But since Malebolge
runs right into the mouth of its last well,
the placement of each valley means it must
have one bank high and have the other short;
and so we reached, at length, the jutting where
the last stone of the ruined bridge breaks off.
The breath within my lungs was so exhausted
from climbing, I could not go on; in fact,
as soon as I had reached that stone, I sat.
"Now you must cast aside your laziness,"
my master said, "for he who rests on down
or under covers cannot come to fame;
and he who spends his life without renown
leaves such a vestige of himself on earth
as smoke bequeaths to air or foam to water.
Therefore, get up; defeat your breathlessness
with spirit that can win all battles if
the body's heaviness does not deter it.
A longer ladder still is to be climbed;
it's not enough to have left them behind;
if you have understood, now profit from it."
Then I arose and showed myself far better
equipped with breath than I had been before:
"Go on, for I am strong and confident."
We took our upward way upon the ridge,
with crags more jagged, narrow, difficult,
and much more steep than we had crossed before.
I spoke as we went on, not to seem weak;
at this, a voice came from the ditch beyond—
a voice that was not suited to form words.
I know not what he said, although I was
already at the summit of the bridge
that crosses there; and yet he seemed to move.
I had bent downward, but my living eyes
could not see to the bottom through that dark;
at which I said: "O master, can we reach
the other belt? Let us descend the wall,
for as I hear and cannot understand,
so I see down but can distinguish nothing."

E se non fosse che da quel precinto
più che da l'altro era la costa corta,
non so di lui, ma io sarei ben vinto.
Ma perché Malebolge inver' la porta
del bassissimo pozzo tutta pende,
lo sito di ciascuna valle porta
che l'una costa surge e l'altra scende;
noi pur venimmo al fine in su la punta
onde l'ultima pietra si scoscende.
La lena m'era del polmon sì munta
quand' io fui sù, ch'i' non potea più oltre,
anzi m'assisi ne la prima giunta.
"Omai convien che tu così ti spoltre,"
disse 'l maestro; "ché, seggendo in piuma,
in fama non si vien, né sotto coltre;
sanza la qual chi sua vita consuma,
cotal vestigio in terra di sé lascia,
qual fummo in aere e in acqua la schiuma.
E però leva sù; vinci l'ambascia
con l'animo che vince ogne battaglia,
se col suo grave corpo non s'accascia.
Più lunga scala convien che si saglia;
non basta da costoro esser partito.
Se tu mi 'ntendi, or fa sì che ti vaglia."
Leva'mi allor, mostrandomi fornito
meglio di lena ch'i' non mi sentia,
e dissi: "Va, ch'i' son forte e ardito."
Su per lo scoglio prendemmo la via,
ch'era ronchioso, stretto e malagevole,
ed erto più assai che quel di pria.
Parlando andava per non parer fievole;
onde una voce uscì de l'altro fosso,
a parole formar disconvenevole.
Non so che disse, ancor che sovra 'l dosso
fossi de l'arco già che varca quivi;
ma chi parlava ad ire parea mosso.
Io era vòlto in giù, ma li occhi vivi
non poteano ire al fondo per lo scuro;
per ch'io: "Maestro, fa che tu arrivi
da l'altro cinghio e dismontiam lo muro;
ché, com' i' odo quinci e non intendo,
così giù veggio e neente affiguro."

"The only answer that I give to you
is doing it," he said. "A just request
is to be met in silence, by the act."
We then climbed down the bridge, just at the end
where it runs right into the eighth embankment,
and now the moat was plain enough to me;
and there within I saw a dreadful swarm
of serpents so extravagant in form—
remembering them still drains my blood from me.
Let Libya boast no more about her sands;
for if she breeds chelydri, jaculi,
cenchres with amphisbaena, pareae,
she never showed—with all of Ethiopia
or all the land that borders the Red Sea—
so many, such malignant, pestilences.
Among this cruel and depressing swarm,
ran people who were naked, terrified,
with no hope of a hole or heliotrope.
Their hands were tied behind by serpents; these
had thrust their head and tail right through the loins,
and then were knotted on the other side.
And—there!—a serpent sprang with force at one
who stood upon our shore, transfixing him
just where the neck and shoulders form a knot.
No *o* or *i* has ever been transcribed
so quickly as that soul caught fire and burned
and, as he fell, completely turned to ashes;
and when he lay, undone, upon the ground,
the dust of him collected by itself
and instantly returned to what it was:
just so, it is asserted by great sages,
that, when it reaches its five-hundredth year,
the phoenix dies and then is born again;
lifelong it never feeds on grass or grain,
only on drops of incense and amomum;
its final winding sheets are nard and myrrh.
And just as he who falls, and knows not how—
by demon's force that drags him to the ground
or by some other hindrance that binds man—
who, when he rises, stares about him, all
bewildered by the heavy anguish he
has suffered, sighing as he looks around;

"Altra risposta," disse, "non ti rendo
se non lo far; ché la dimanda onesta
si de' seguir con l'opera tacendo."
Noi discendemmo il ponte da la testa
dove s'aggiugne con l'ottava ripa,
e poi mi fu la bolgia manifesta:
e vidivi entro terribile stipa
di serpenti, e di sì diversa mena
che la memoria il sangue ancor mi scipa.
Più non si vanti Libia con sua rena;
ché se chelidri, iaculi e faree
produce, e cencri con anfisibena,
né tante pestilenzie né sì ree
mostrò già mai con tutta l'Etïopia
né con ciò che di sopra al Mar Rosso èe.
Tra questa cruda e tristissima copia
corrëan genti nude e spaventate,
sanza sperar pertugio o elitropia:
con serpi le man dietro avean legate;
quelle ficcavan per le ren la coda
e 'l capo, ed eran dinanzi aggroppate.
Ed ecco a un ch'era da nostra proda,
s'avventò un serpente che 'l trafisse
là dove 'l collo a le spalle s'annoda.
Né *o* sì tosto mai né *i* si scrisse,
com' el s'accese e arse, e cener tutto
convenne che cascando divenisse;
e poi che fu a terra sì distrutto,
la polver si raccolse per sé stessa
e 'n quel medesmo ritornò di butto.
Così per li gran savi si confessa
che la fenice more e poi rinasce,
quando al cinquecentesimo anno appressa;
erba né biado in sua vita non pasce,
ma sol d'incenso lagrime e d'amomo,
e nardo e mirra son l'ultime fasce.
E qual è quel che cade, e non sa como,
per forza di demon ch'a terra il tira,
o d'altra oppilazion che lega l'omo,
quando si leva, che 'ntorno si mira
tutto smarrito de la grande angoscia
ch'elli ha sofferta, e guardando sospira:

so did this sinner stare when he arose.
Oh, how severe it is, the power of God
that, as its vengeance, showers down such blows!
My guide then asked that sinner who he was;
to this he answered: "Not long since, I rained
from Tuscany into this savage maw.
Mule that I was, the bestial life pleased me
and not the human; I am Vanni Fucci,
beast; and the den that suited me—Pistoia."
And I to Virgil: "Tell him not to slip
away, and ask what sin has thrust him here;
I knew him as a man of blood and anger."
The sinner heard and did not try to feign
but turned his mind and face, intent, toward me;
and coloring with miserable shame,
he said: "I suffer more because you've caught me
in this, the misery you see, than I
suffered when taken from the other life.
I can't refuse to answer what you ask:
I am set down so far because I robbed
the sacristy of its fair ornaments,
and someone else was falsely blamed for that.
But lest this sight give you too much delight,
if you can ever leave these lands of darkness,
open your ears to my announcement, hear:
Pistoia first will strip herself of Blacks,
then Florence will renew her men and manners.
From Val di Magra, Mars will draw a vapor
which turbid clouds will try to wrap; the clash
between them will be fierce, impetuous,
a tempest, fought upon Campo Piceno,
until that vapor, vigorous, shall crack
the mist, and every White be struck by it.
And I have told you this to make you grieve."

tal era 'l peccator levato poscia.
Oh potenza di Dio, quant' è severa,
che cotai colpi per vendetta croscia!
Lo duca il domandò poi chi ello era;
per ch'ei rispuose: "Io piovvi di Toscana,
poco tempo è, in questa gola fiera.
Vita bestial mi piacque e non umana,
sì come a mul ch'i' fui; son Vanni Fucci
bestia, e Pistoia mi fu degna tana."
E ïo al duca: "Dilli che non mucci,
e domanda che colpa qua giù 'l pinse;
ch'io 'l vidi omo di sangue e di crucci."
E 'l peccator, che 'ntese, non s'infinse,
ma drizzò verso me l'animo e 'l volto,
e di trista vergogna si dipinse;
poi disse: "Più mi duol che tu m'hai colto
ne la miseria dove tu mi vedi,
che quando fui de l'altra vita tolto.
Io non posso negar quel che tu chiedi;
in giù son messo tanto perch' io fui
ladro a la sagrestia d'i belli arredi,
e falsamente già fu apposto altrui.
Ma perché di tal vista tu non godi,
se mai sarai di fuor da' luoghi bui,
apri li orecchi al mio annunzio, e odi.
Pistoia in pria d'i Neri si dimagra;
poi Fiorenza rinova gente e modi.
Tragge Marte vapor di Val di Magra
ch'è di torbidi nuvoli involuto;
e con tempesta impetüosa e agra
sovra Campo Picen fia combattuto;
ond' ei repente spezzerà la nebbia,
sì ch'ogne Bianco ne sarà feruto.
E detto l'ho perché doler ti debbia!"

CANTO XXV

When he had finished with his words, the thief
raised high his fists with both figs cocked and cried:
"Take that, o God; I square them off for you!"
From that time on, those serpents were my friends,
for one of them coiled then around his neck,
as if to say, "I'll have you speak no more";
another wound about his arms and bound him
again and wrapped itself in front so firmly,
he could not even make them budge an inch.
Pistoia, ah, Pistoia, must you last:
why not decree your self-incineration,
since you surpass your seed in wickedness?
Throughout the shadowed circles of deep Hell,
I saw no soul against God so rebel,
not even he who fell from Theban walls.
He fled and could not say another word;
and then I saw a Centaur full of anger,
shouting: "Where is he, where's that bitter one?"
I do not think Maremma has the number
of snakes that Centaur carried on his haunch
until the part that takes our human form.
Upon his shoulders and behind his nape
there lay a dragon with its wings outstretched;
it sets ablaze all those it intercepts.
My master said: "That Centaur there is Cacus,
who often made a lake of blood within
a grotto underneath Mount Aventine.
He does not ride the same road as his brothers
because he stole—and most deceitfully—
from the great herd nearby; his crooked deeds
ended beneath the club of Hercules,
who may have given him a hundred blows—
but he was not alive to feel the tenth."

Still the Eighth Circle, Seventh Pouch: the Thieves. Vanni Fucci and his obscene figs against God. The Centaur Cacus. Five Florentine Thieves, three of them humans and two of them serpents. The astounding metamorphoses undergone by four of them.

Al fine de le sue parole il ladro
le mani alzò con amendue le fiche,
gridando: "Togli, Dio, ch'a te le squadro!"
Da indi in qua mi fuor le serpi amiche,
perch' una li s'avvolse allora al collo,
come dicesse "Non vo' che più diche";
e un'altra a la braccia, e rilegollo,
ribadendo sé stessa sì dinanzi,
che non potea con esse dare un crollo.
Ahi Pistoia, Pistoia, ché non stanzi
d'incenerarti sì che più non duri,
poi che 'n mal fare il seme tuo avanzi?
Per tutt' i cerchi de lo 'nferno scuri
non vidi spirto in Dio tanto superbo,
non quel che cadde a Tebe giù da' muri.
El si fuggì che non parlò più verbo;
e io vidi un centauro pien di rabbia
venir chiamando: "Ov' è, ov' è l'acerbo?"
Maremma non cred' io che tante n'abbia,
quante bisce elli avea su per la groppa
infin ove comincia nostra labbia.
Sovra le spalle, dietro da la coppa,
con l'ali aperte li giacea un draco;
e quello affuoca qualunque s'intoppa.
Lo mio maestro disse: "Questi è Caco,
che, sotto 'l sasso di monte Aventino,
di sangue fece spesse volte laco.
Non va co' suoi fratei per un cammino,
per lo furto che frodolente fece
del grand armento ch'elli ebbe a vicino;
onde cessar le sue opere biece
sotto la mazza d'Ercule, che forse
gliene diè cento, e non sentì le diece."

While he was talking so, Cacus ran by
and, just beneath our ledge, three souls arrived;
but neither I nor my guide noticed them
until they had cried out: "And who are you?"
At this the words we shared were interrupted,
and we attended only to those spirits.
I did not recognize them, but it happened,
as chance will usually bring about,
that one of them called out the other's name,
exclaiming: "Where was Cianfa left behind?"
At this, so that my guide might be alert,
I raised my finger up from chin to nose.
If, reader, you are slow now to believe
what I shall tell, that is no cause for wonder,
for I who saw it hardly can accept it.
As I kept my eyes fixed upon those sinners,
a serpent with six feet springs out against
one of the three, and clutches him completely.
It gripped his belly with its middle feet,
and with its forefeet grappled his two arms;
and then it sank its teeth in both his cheeks;
it stretched its rear feet out along his thighs
and ran its tail along between the two,
then straightened it again behind his loins.
No ivy ever gripped a tree so fast
as when that horrifying monster clasped
and intertwined the other's limbs with its.
Then just as if their substance were warm wax,
they stuck together and they mixed their colors,
so neither seemed what he had been before;
just as, when paper's kindled, where it still
has not caught flame in full, its color's dark
though not yet black, while white is dying off.
The other two souls stared, and each one cried:
"Ah me, Agnello, how you change! Just see,
you are already neither two nor one!"
Then two heads were already joined in one,
when in one face where two had been dissolved,
two intermingled shapes appeared to us.
Two arms came into being from four lengths;
the thighs and legs, the belly and the chest
became such limbs as never had been seen.

Mentre che sì parlava, ed el trascorse,
e tre spiriti venner sotto noi,
de' quai né io né 'l duca mio s'accorse,
se non quando gridar: "Chi siete voi?"
per che nostra novella si ristette,
e intendemmo pur ad essi poi.
Io non li conoscea; ma ei seguette,
come suol seguitar per alcun caso,
che l'un nomar un altro convenette,
dicendo: "Cianfa dove fia rimaso?"
per ch'io, acciò che 'l duca stesse attento,
mi puosi 'l dito su dal mento al naso.
Se tu se' or, lettore, a creder lento
ciò ch'io dirò, non sarà maraviglia,
ché io che 'l vidi, a pena il mi consento.
Com' io tenea levate in lor le ciglia,
e un serpente con sei piè si lancia
dinanzi a l'uno, e tutto a lui s'appiglia.
Co' piè di mezzo li avvinse la pancia
e con li anterïor le braccia prese;
poi li addentò e l'una e l'altra guancia;
li diretani a le cosce distese,
e miseli la coda tra 'mbedue
e dietro per le ren sù la ritese.
Ellera abbarbicata mai non fue
ad alber sì, come l'orribil fiera
per l'altrui membra avviticchiò le sue.
Poi s'appiccar, come di calda cera
fossero stati, e mischiar lor colore,
né l'un né l'altro già parea quel ch'era:
come procede innanzi da l'ardore,
per lo papiro suso, un color bruno
che non è nero ancora e 'l bianco more.
Li altri due 'l riguardavano, e ciascuno
gridava: "Omè, Agnel, come ti muti!
Vedi che già non se' né due né uno."
Già eran li due capi un divenuti,
quando n'apparver due figure miste
in una faccia, ov' eran due perduti.
Fersi le braccia due di quattro liste;
le cosce con le gambe e 'l ventre e 'l casso
divenner membra che non fuor mai viste.

And every former shape was canceled there:
that perverse image seemed to share in both—
and none; and so, and slowly, it moved on.
Just as the lizard, when it darts from hedge
to hedge, beneath the dog days' giant lash,
seems, if it cross one's path, a lightning flash,
so seemed a blazing little serpent moving
against the bellies of the other two,
as black and livid as a peppercorn.
Attacking one of them, it pierced right through
the part where we first take our nourishment;
and then it fell before him at full length.
The one it had transfixed stared but said nothing;
in fact he only stood his ground and yawned
as one whom sleep or fever has undone.
The serpent stared at him, he at the serpent;
one through his wound, the other through his mouth
were smoking violently; their smoke met.
Let Lucan now be silent, where he sings
of sad Sabellus and Nasidius,
and wait to hear what flies off from my bow.
Let Ovid now be silent, where he tells
of Cadmus, Arethusa; if his verse
has made of one a serpent, one a fountain,
I do not envy him; he never did
transmute two natures, face to face, so that
both forms were ready to exchange their matter.
These were the ways they answered to each other:
the serpent split its tail into a fork;
the wounded sinner drew his steps together.
The legs and then the thighs along with them
so fastened to each other that the juncture
soon left no sign that was discernible.
Meanwhile the cleft tail took upon itself
the form the other gradually lost;
its skin grew soft, the other's skin grew hard.
I saw the arms that drew in at his armpits
and also saw the monster's two short feet
grow long for just as much as those were shortened.
The serpent's hind feet, twisted up together,
became the member that man hides; just as
the wretch put out two hind paws from his member.

Ogne primaio aspetto ivi era casso:
due e nessun l'imagine perversa
parea; e tal sen gio con lento passo.
Come 'l ramarro sotto la gran fersa
dei dì canicular, cangiando sepe,
folgore par se la via attraversa,
sì pareva, venendo verso l'epe
de li altri due, un serpentello acceso,
livido e nero come gran di pepe;
e quella parte onde prima è preso
nostro alimento, a l'un di lor trafisse;
poi cadde giuso innanzi lui disteso.
Lo trafitto 'l mirò, ma nulla disse;
anzi, co' piè fermati, sbadigliava
pur come sonno o febbre l'assalisse.
Elli 'l serpente e quei lui riguardava;
l'un per la piaga e l'altro per la bocca
fummavan forte, e 'l fummo si scontrava.
Taccia Lucano omai là dov' e' tocca
del misero Sabello e di Nasidio,
e attenda a udir quel ch'or si scocca.
Taccia di Cadmo e d'Aretusa Ovidio,
ché se quello in serpente e quella in fonte
converte poetando, io non lo 'nvidio;
ché due nature mai a fronte a fronte
non trasmutò sì ch'amendue le forme
a cambiar lor matera fosser pronte.
Insieme si rispuosero a tai norme,
che 'l serpente la coda in forca fesse,
e 'l feruto ristrinse insieme l'orme.
Le gambe con le cosce seco stesse
s'appiccar sì, che 'n poco la giuntura
non facea segno alcun che si paresse.
Togliea la coda fessa la figura
che si perdeva là, e la sua pelle
si facea molle, e quella di là dura.
Io vidi intrar le braccia per l'ascelle,
e i due piè de la fiera, ch'eran corti,
tanto allungar quanto accorciavan quelle.
Poscia li piè di rietro, insieme attorti,
diventaron lo membro che l'uom cela,
e 'l misero del suo n'avea due porti.

And while the smoke veils each with a new color,
and now breeds hair upon the skin of one,
just as it strips the hair from off the other,
the one rose up, the other fell; and yet
they never turned aside their impious eyelamps,
beneath which each of them transformed his snout:
he who stood up drew his back toward the temples,
and from the excess matter growing there
came ears upon the cheeks that had been bare;
whatever had not been pulled back but kept,
superfluous, then made his face a nose
and thickened out his lips appropriately.
He who was lying down thrust out his snout;
and even as the snail hauls in its horns,
he drew his ears straight back into his head;
his tongue, which had before been whole and fit
for speech, now cleaves; the other's tongue, which had
been forked, now closes up; and the smoke stops.
The soul that had become an animal,
now hissing, hurried off along the valley;
the other one, behind him, speaks and spits.
And then he turned aside his new-made shoulders
and told the third soul: "I'd have Buoso run
on all fours down this road, as I have done."
And so I saw the seventh ballast change
and rechange; may the strangeness plead for me
if there's been some confusion in my pen.
And though my eyes were somewhat blurred, my mind
bewildered, those three sinners did not flee
so secretly that I could not perceive
Puccio Sciancato clearly, he who was
the only soul who'd not been changed among
the three companions we had met at first;
the other one made you, Gaville, grieve.

Mentre che 'l fummo l'uno e l'altro vela
di color novo, e genera 'l pel suso
per l'una parte e da l'altra il dipela,
l'un si levò e l'altro cadde giuso,
non torcendo però le lucerne empie,
sotto le quai ciascun cambiava muso.
Quel ch'era dritto, il trasse ver' le tempie,
e di troppa matera ch'in là venne
uscir li orecchi de le gote scempie;
ciò che non corse in dietro e si ritenne
di quel soverchio, fé naso a la faccia
e le labbra ingrossò quanto convenne.
Quel che giacëa, il muso innanzi caccia,
e li orecchi ritira per la testa
come face le corna la lumaccia;
e la lingua, ch'avëa unita e presta
prima a parlar, si fende, e la forcuta
ne l'altro si richiude; e 'l fummo resta.
L'anima ch'era fiera divenuta,
suffolando si fugge per la valle,
e l'altro dietro a lui parlando sputa.
Poscia li volse le novelle spalle,
e disse a l'altro: "I' vo' che Buoso corra,
com' ho fatt' io, carpon per questo calle."
Così vid' io la settima zavorra
mutare e trasmutare; e qui mi scusi
la novità se fior la penna abborra.
E avvegna che li occhi miei confusi
fossero alquanto e l'animo smagato,
non poter quei fuggirsi tanto chiusi,
ch'i' non scorgessi ben Puccio Sciancato;
ed era quel che sol, di tre compagni
che venner prima, non era mutato;
l'altr' era quel che tu, Gaville, piagni.

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ULYSSES & DIOMEDES



CANTO XXVI

Be joyous, Florence, you are great indeed,
for over sea and land you beat your wings;
through every part of Hell your name extends!
Among the thieves I found five citizens
of yours—and such, that shame has taken me;
with them, you can ascend to no high honor.
But if the dreams dreamt close to dawn are true,
then little time will pass before you feel
what Prato and the others crave for you.
Were that already come, it would not be
too soon—and let it come, since it must be!
As I grow older, it will be more heavy.
We left that deep and, by protruding stones
that served as stairs for our descent before,
my guide climbed up again and drew me forward;
and as we took our solitary path
among the ridge's jagged spurs and rocks,
our feet could not make way without our hands.
It grieved me then and now grieves me again
when I direct my mind to what I saw;
and more than usual, I curb my talent,
that it not run where virtue does not guide;
so that, if my kind star or something better
has given me that gift, I not abuse it.
As many as the fireflies the peasant
(while resting on a hillside in the season
when he who lights the world least hides his face),
just when the fly gives way to the mosquito,
sees glimmering below, down in the valley,
there where perhaps he gathers grapes and tills—
so many were the flames that glittered in
the eighth abyss; I made this out as soon
as I had come to where one sees the bottom.

Still the Eighth Circle, Seventh Pouch: the Thieves. Dante's invective against Florence. View of the Eighth Pouch, where Fraudulent Counselors are clothed in the flames that burn them. Ulysses and Diomedes in one shared flame. Ulysses' tale of his final voyage.

Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' sì grande
che per mare e per terra batti l'ali,
e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande!
Tra li ladron trovai cinque cotali
tuoi cittadini onde mi ven vergogna,
e tu in grande orranza non ne sali.
Ma se presso al mattin del ver si sogna,
tu sentirai, di qua da picciol tempo,
di quel che Prato, non ch'altri, t'agogna.
E se già fosse, non saria per tempo.
Così foss' ei, da che pur esser dee!
ché più mi graverà, com' più m'attempo.
Noi ci partimmo, e su per le scalee
che n'avea fatte i borni a scender pria,
rimontò 'l duca mio e trasse mee;
e proseguendo la solinga via,
tra le schegge e tra ' rocchi de lo scoglio
lo piè sanza la man non si spedia.
Allor mi dolsi, e ora mi ridoglio
quando drizzo la mente a ciò ch'io vidi,
e più lo 'ngegno affreno ch'i' non soglio,
perché non corra che virtù nol guidi;
sì che, se stella bona o miglior cosa
m'ha dato 'l ben, ch'io stessi nol m'invidi.
Quante 'l villan ch'al poggio si riposa,
nel tempo che colui che 'l mondo schiara
la faccia sua a noi tien meno ascosa,
come la mosca cede a la zanzara,
vede lucciole giù per la vallea,
forse colà dov' e' vendemmia e ara:
di tante fiamme tutta risplendea
l'ottava bolgia, sì com' io m'accorsi
tosto che fui là 've 'l fondo parea.

Even as he who was avenged by bears
saw, as it left, Elijah's chariot—
its horses rearing, rising right to heaven—
when he could not keep track of it except
by watching one lone flame in its ascent,
just like a little cloud that climbs on high:
so, through the gullet of that ditch, each flame
must make its way; no flame displays its prey,
though every flame has carried off a sinner.
I stood upon the bridge and leaned straight out
to see; and if I had not gripped a rock,
I should have fallen off—without a push.
My guide, who noted how intent I was,
told me: "Within those fires there are souls;
each one is swathed in that which scorches him."
"My master," I replied, "on hearing you,
I am more sure; but I'd already thought
that it was so, and I had meant to ask:
Who is within the flame that comes so twinned
above that it would seem to rise out of
the pyre Eteocles shared with his brother?"
He answered me: "Within that flame, Ulysses
and Diomedes suffer; they, who went
as one to rage, now share one punishment.
And there, together in their flame, they grieve
over the horse's fraud that caused a breach—
the gate that let Rome's noble seed escape.
There they regret the guile that makes the dead
Deïdamia still lament Achilles;
and there, for the Palladium, they pay."
"If they can speak within those sparks," I said,
"I pray you and repray and, master, may
my prayer be worth a thousand pleas, do not
forbid my waiting here until the flame
with horns approaches us; for you can see
how, out of my desire, I bend toward it."
And he to me: "What you have asked is worthy
of every praise; therefore, I favor it.
I only ask you this: refrain from talking.
Let me address them—I have understood
what you desire of them. Since they were Greek,
perhaps they'd be disdainful of your speech."

E qual colui che si vengiò con li orsi
vide 'l carro d'Elia al dipartire,
quando i cavalli al cielo erti levorsi,
che nol potea sì con li occhi seguire,
ch'el vedesse altro che la fiamma sola,
sì come nuvoletta, in sù salire:
tal si move ciascuna per la gola
del fosso, ché nessuna mostra 'l furto,
e ogne fiamma un peccatore invola.
Io stava sovra 'l ponte a veder surto,
sì che s'io non avessi un ronchion preso,
caduto sarei giù sanz' esser urto.
E 'l duca, che mi vide tanto atteso,
disse: "Dentro dai fuochi son li spirti;
catun si fascia di quel ch'elli è inceso."
"Maestro mio," rispuos' io, "per udirti
son io più certo; ma già m'era avviso
che così fosse, e già volvea dirti:
chi è 'n quel foco che vien sì diviso
di sopra, che par surger de la pira
dov' Eteòcle col fratel fu miso?"
Rispuose a me: "Là dentro si martira
Ulisse e Dïomede, e così insieme
a la vendetta vanno come a l'ira;
e dentro da la lor fiamma si geme
l'agguato del caval che fé la porta
onde uscì de' Romani il gentil seme.
Piangevisi entro l'arte per che, morta,
Deïdamìa ancor si duol d'Achille,
e del Palladio pena vi si porta."
"S'ei posson dentro da quelle faville
parlar," diss' io, "maestro, assai ten priego
e ripriego, che 'l priego vaglia mille,
che non mi facci de l'attender niego
fin che la fiamma cornuta qua vegna;
vedi che del disio ver' lei mi piego!"
Ed elli a me: "La tua preghiera è degna
di molta loda, e io però l'accetto;
ma fa che la tua lingua si sostegna.
Lascia parlare a me, ch'i' ho concetto
ciò che tu vuoi; ch'ei sarebbero schivi,
perch' e' fuor greci, forse del tuo detto."

And when my guide adjudged the flame had reached
a point where time and place were opportune,
this was the form I heard his words assume:
"You two who move as one within the flame,
if I deserved of you while I still lived,
if I deserved of you much or a little
when in the world I wrote my noble lines,
do not move on; let one of you retell
where, having gone astray, he found his death."
The greater horn within that ancient flame
began to sway and tremble, murmuring
just like a fire that struggles in the wind;
and then he waved his flame-tip back and forth
as if it were a tongue that tried to speak,
and flung toward us a voice that answered: "When
I sailed away from Circe, who'd beguiled me
to stay more than a year there, near Gaeta—
before Aeneas gave that place a name—
neither my fondness for my son nor pity
for my old father nor the love I owed
Penelope, which would have gladdened her,
was able to defeat in me the longing
I had to gain experience of the world
and of the vices and the worth of men.
Therefore, I set out on the open sea
with but one ship and that small company
of those who never had deserted me.
I saw as far as Spain, far as Morocco,
along both shores; I saw Sardinia
and saw the other islands that sea bathes.
And I and my companions were already
old and slow, when we approached the narrows
where Hercules set up his boundary stones
that men might heed and never reach beyond:
upon my right, I had gone past Seville,
and on the left, already passed Ceüta.
'Brothers,' I said, 'o you, who having crossed
a hundred thousand dangers, reach the west,
to this brief waking-time that still is left
unto your senses, you must not deny
experience of that which lies beyond
the sun, and of the world that is unpeopled.

Poi che la fiamma fu venuta quivi
dove parve al mio duca tempo e loco,
in questa forma lui parlare audivi:
"O voi che siete due dentro ad un foco,
s'io meritai di voi mentre ch'io vissi,
s'io meritai di voi assai o poco
quando nel mondo li alti versi scrissi,
non vi movete; ma l'un di voi dica
dove, per lui, perduto a morir gissi."
Lo maggior corno de la fiamma antica
cominciò a crollarsi mormorando,
pur come quella cui vento affatica;
indi la cima qua e là menando,
come fosse la lingua che parlasse,
gittò voce di fuori e disse: "Quando
mi diparti' da Circe, che sottrasse
me più d'un anno là presso a Gaeta,
prima che sì Enëa la nomasse,
né dolcezza di figlio, né la pieta
del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore
lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,
vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore
ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
e de li vizi umani e del valore;
ma misi me per l'alto mare aperto
sol con un legno e con quella compagna
picciola da la qual non fui diserto.
L'un lito e l'altro vidi infin la Spagna,
fin nel Morrocco, e l'isola d'i Sardi,
e l'altre che quel mare intorno bagna.
Io e ' compagni eravam vecchi e tardi
quando venimmo a quella foce stretta
dov' Ercule segnò li suoi riguardi
acció che l'uom più oltre non si metta;
da la man destra mi lasciai Sibilia,
da l'altra già m'avea lasciata Setta.
'O frati,' dissi, 'che per cento milia
perigli siete giunti a l'occidente,
a questa tanto picciola vigilia
d'i nostri sensi ch'è del rimanente
non vogliate negar l'esperïenza
di retro al sol, del mondo sanza gente.

Consider well the seed that gave you birth:
you were not made to live your lives as brutes,
but to be followers of worth and knowledge.'
I spurred my comrades with this brief address
to meet the journey with such eagerness
that I could hardly, then, have held them back;
and having turned our stern toward morning, we
made wings out of our oars in a wild flight
and always gained upon our left-hand side.
At night I now could see the other pole
and all its stars; the star of ours had fallen
and never rose above the plain of the ocean.
Five times the light beneath the moon had been
rekindled, and, as many times, was spent,
since that hard passage faced our first attempt,
when there before us rose a mountain, dark
because of distance, and it seemed to me
the highest mountain I had ever seen.
And we were glad, but this soon turned to sorrow,
for out of that new land a whirlwind rose
and hammered at our ship, against her bow.
Three times it turned her round with all the waters;
and at the fourth, it lifted up the stern
so that our prow plunged deep, as pleased an Other,
until the sea again closed—over us."

Considerate la vostra semenza:
fatti non foste a viver come bruti,
ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza.'
Li miei compagni fec' io sì aguti,
con questa orazion picciola, al cammino,
che a pena poscia li avrei ritenuti;
e volta nostra poppa nel mattino,
de' remi facemmo ali al folle volo,
sempre acquistando dal lato mancino.
Tutte le stelle già de l'altro polo
vedea la notte, e 'l nostro tanto basso,
che non surgëa fuor del marin suolo.
Cinque volte racceso e tante casso
lo lume era di sotto da la luna,
poi che 'ntrati eravam ne l'alto passo,
quando n'apparve una montagna, bruna
per la distanza, e parvemi alta tanto
quanto veduta non avëa alcuna.
Noi ci allegrammo, e tosto tornò in pianto;
ché de la nova terra un turbo nacque
e percosse del legno il primo canto.
Tre volte il fé girar con tutte l'acque;
a la quarta levar la poppa in suso
e la prora ire in giù, com' altrui piacque,
infin che 'l mar fu sovra noi richiuso."

CANTO XXVII

The flame already was erect and silent—
it had no more to say. Now it had left us
with the permission of the gentle poet,
when, just behind it, came another flame
that drew our eyes to watch its tip because
of the perplexing sound that it sent forth.
Even as the Sicilian bull (that first
had bellowed with the cry—and this was just—
of him who shaped it with his instruments)
would always bellow with its victim's voice,
so that, although that bull was only brass,
it seemed as if it were pierced through by pain;
so were the helpless words that, from the first,
had found no path or exit from the flame,
transformed into the language of the fire.
But after they had found their way up toward
the tip, and given it that movement which
the tongue had given them along their passage,
we heard: "O you to whom I turn my voice,
who only now were talking Lombard, saying,
'Now you may leave—I'll not provoke more speech,'
though I have come perhaps a little late,
may it not trouble you to stop and speak
with me; see how I stay—and I am burning!
If you have fallen into this blind world
but recently, out of the sweet Italian
country from which I carry all my guilt,
do tell me if the Romagnoles have peace
or war; I was from there—the hills between
Urbino and the ridge where Tiber springs."
I still was bent, attentive, over him,
when my guide nudged me lightly at the side
and said: "You speak; he is Italian."

Still the Eighth Circle, Eighth Pouch: the Fraudulent Counselors. Guido da Montefeltro, for whom Dante provides a panorama of the state of political affairs in Romagna. Guido's tale of the anticipatory—but unavailing—absolution given him by Boniface VIII. The quarrel of a demon and St Francis over Guido's soul.

Già era dritta in sù la fiamma e queta
per non dir più, e già da noi sen gia
con la licenza del dolce poeta,
quand' un'altra, che dietro a lei venìa,
ne fece volger li occhi a la sua cima
per un confuso suon che fuor n'uscia.
Come 'l bue cicilian che mugghiò prima
col pianto di colui, e ciò fu dritto,
che l'avea temperato con sua lima,
mugghiava con la voce de l'afflitto,
sì che, con tutto che fosse di rame,
pur el pareva dal dolor trafitto;
così, per non aver via né forame
dal principio nel foco, in suo linguaggio
si convertïan le parole grame.
Ma poscia ch'ebber colto lor vïaggio
su per la punta, dandole quel guizzo
che dato avea la lingua in lor passaggio,
udimmo dire: "O tu a cu' io drizzo
la voce e che parlavi mo lombardo,
dicendo 'Istra ten va, più non t'adizzo,'
perch' io sia giunto forse alquanto tardo,
non t'incresca restare a parlar meco;
vedi che non incresce a me, e ardo!
Se tu pur mo in questo mondo cieco
caduto se' di quella dolce terra
latina ond' io mia colpa tutta reco,
dimmi se Romagnuoli han pace o guerra;
ch'io fui d'i monti là intra Orbino
e 'l giogo di che Tever si diserra."
Io era in giuso ancora attento e chino,
quando il mio duca mi tentò di costa,
dicendo: "Parla tu; questi è latino."

And I, who had my answer set already,
without delay began to speak to him:
"O soul that is concealed below in flame,
Romagna is not now and never was
quite free of war inside its tyrants' hearts;
but when I left her, none had broken out.
Ravenna stands as it has stood for years;
the eagle of Polenta shelters it
and also covers Cervia with his wings.
The city that already stood long trial
and made a bloody heap out of the French,
now finds itself again beneath green paws.
Both mastiffs of Verruchio, old and new,
who dealt so badly with Montagna, use
their teeth to bore where they have always gnawed.
The cities on Lamone and Santerno
are led by the young lion of the white lair;
from summer unto winter, he shifts factions.
That city with its side bathed by the Savio,
just as it lies between the plain and mountain,
lives somewhere between tyranny and freedom.
And now, I pray you, tell me who you are:
do not be harder than I've been with you,
that in the world your name may still endure."
After the flame, in customary fashion,
had roared awhile, it moved its pointed tip
this side and that and then set free this breath:
"If I thought my reply were meant for one
who ever could return into the world,
this flame would stir no more; and yet, since none—
if what I hear is true—ever returned
alive from this abyss, then without fear
of facing infamy, I answer you.
I was a man of arms, then wore the cord,
believing that, so girt, I made amends;
and surely what I thought would have been true
had not the Highest Priest—may he be damned!—
made me fall back into my former sins;
and how and why, I'd have you hear from me.
While I still had the form of bones and flesh
my mother gave to me, my deeds were not
those of the lion but those of the fox.

E io, ch'avea già pronta la risposta,
sanza indugio a parlare incominciai:
"O anima che se' là giù nascosta,
Romagna tua non è, e non fu mai,
sanza guerra ne' cuor de' suoi tiranni;
ma 'n palese nessuna or vi lasciai.
Ravenna sta come stata è molt' anni:
l'aguglia da Polenta la si cova,
sì che Cervia ricuopre co' suoi vanni.
La terra che fé già la lunga prova
e di Franceschi sanguinoso mucchio,
sotto le branche verdi si ritrova.
E 'l mastin vecchio e 'l nuovo da Verrucchio,
che fecer di Montagna il mal governo,
là dove soglion fan d'i denti succhio.
Le città di Lamone e di Santerno
conduce il lïoncel dal nido bianco,
che muta parte da la state al verno.
E quella cu' il Savio bagna il fianco,
così com' ella sie' tra 'l piano e 'l monte,
tra tirannia si vive e stato franco.
Ora chi se', ti priego che ne conte;
non esser duro più ch'altri sia stato,
se 'l nome tuo nel mondo tegna fronte."
Poscia che 'l foco alquanto ebbe rugghiato
al modo suo, l'aguta punta mosse
di qua, di là, e poi diè cotal fiato:
"S'i' credesse che mia risposta fosse
a persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
questa fiamma staria sanza più scosse;
ma però che già mai di questo fondo
non tornò vivo alcun, s'i' odo il vero,
sanza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.
Io fui uom d'arme, e poi fui cordigliero,
credendomi, sì cinto, fare ammenda;
e certo il creder mio venìa intero,
se non fosse il gran prete, a cui mal prenda!,
che mi rimise ne le prime colpe;
e come e *quare*, voglio che m'intenda.
Mentre ch'io forma fui d'ossa e di polpe
che la madre mi diè, l'opere mie
non furon leonine, ma di volpe.

The wiles and secret ways—I knew them all
and so employed their arts that my renown
had reached the very boundaries of earth.
But when I saw myself come to that part
of life when it is fitting for all men
to lower sails and gather in their ropes,
what once had been my joy was now dejection;
repenting and confessing, I became
a friar; and—poor me—it would have helped.
The prince of the new Pharisees, who then
was waging war so near the Lateran—
and not against the Jews or Saracens,
for every enemy of his was Christian,
and none of them had gone to conquer Acre
or been a trader in the Sultan's lands—
took no care for the highest office or
the holy orders that were his, or for
my cord, which used to make its wearers leaner.
But just as Constantine, on Mount Soracte,
to cure his leprosy, sought out Sylvester,
so this one sought me out as his instructor,
to ease the fever of his arrogance.
He asked me to give counsel. I was silent—
his words had seemed to me delirious.
And then he said: 'Your heart must not mistrust:
I now absolve you in advance—teach me
to batter Penestrino to the ground.
You surely know that I possess the power
to lock and unlock Heaven; for the keys
my predecessor did not prize are two.'
Then his grave arguments compelled me so,
my silence seemed a worse offense than speech,
and I said: 'Since you cleanse me of the sin
that I must now fall into, Father, know:
long promises and very brief fulfillments
will bring a victory to your high throne.'
Then Francis came, as soon as I was dead,
for me; but one of the black cherubim
told him: 'Don't bear him off; do not cheat me.
He must come down among my menials;
the counsel that he gave was fraudulent;
since then, I've kept close track, to snatch his scalp;

Li accorgimenti e le coperte vie
io seppi tutte, e sì menai lor arte,
ch'al fine de la terra il suono uscie.
Quando mi vidi giunto in quella parte
di mia etade ove ciascun dovrebbe
calar le vele e raccoglier le sarte,
ciò che pria mi piacëa, allor m'increbbe,
e pentuto e confesso mi rendei;
ahi miser lasso! e giovato sarebbe.
Lo principe d'i novi Farisei,
avendo guerra presso a Laterano,
e non con Saracin né con Giudei,
ché ciascun suo nimico era Cristiano,
e nessun era stato a vincer Acri
né mercatante in terra di Soldano,
né sommo officio né ordini sacri
guardò in sé, né in me quel capestro
che solea fare i suoi cinti più macri.
Ma come Costantin chiese Silvestro
d'entro Siratti a guerir de la lebbre,
così mi chiese questi per maestro
a guerir de la sua superba febbre;
domandommi consiglio, e io tacetti
perché le sue parole parver ebbre.
E' poi ridisse: 'Tuo cuor non sospetti;
finor t'assolvo, e tu m'insegna fare
sì come Penestrino in terra getti.
Lo ciel poss' io serrare e diserrare,
come tu sai; però son due le chiavi
che 'l mio antecessor non ebbe care.'
Allor mi pinser li argomenti gravi
là 've 'l tacer mi fu avviso 'l peggio,
e dissi: 'Padre, da che tu mi lavi
di quel peccato ov' io mo cader deggio,
lunga promessa con l'attender corto
ti farà trïunfar ne l'alto seggio.'
Francesco venne poi, com' io fu' morto,
per me; ma un d'i neri cherubini
li disse: 'Non portar; non mi far torto.
Venir se ne dee giù tra ' miei meschini
perché diede 'l consiglio frodolente,
dal quale in qua stato li sono a' crini;

one can't absolve a man who's not repented,
and no one can repent and will at once;
the law of contradiction won't allow it.'
O miserable me, for how I started
when he took hold of me and said: 'Perhaps
you did not think that I was a logician!'
He carried me to Minos; and that monster
twisted his tail eight times around his hide
and then, when he had bit it in great anger,
announced: 'This one is for the thieving fire';
for which—and where, you see—I now am lost,
and in this garb I move in bitterness."
And when, with this, his words were at an end,
the flame departed, sorrowing and writhing
and tossing its sharp horn. We moved beyond;
I went together with my guide, along
the ridge until the other arch that bridges
the ditch where payment is imposed on those
who, since they brought such discord, bear such loads.

ch'assolver non si può chi non si pente,
né pentere e volere insieme puossi
per la contradizion che nol consente.'
Oh me dolente! come mi riscossi
quando mi prese dicendomi: 'Forse
tu non pensavi ch'io löico fossi!'
A Minòs mi portò; e quelli attorse
otto volte la coda al dosso duro;
e poi che per gran rabbia la si morse,
disse: 'Questi è d'i rei del foco furo';
per ch'io là dove vedi son perduto,
e sì vestito, andando, mi rancuro."
Quand' elli ebbe 'l suo dir così compiuto,
la fiamma dolorando si partio,
torcendo e dibattendo 'l corno aguto.
Noi passamm' oltre, e io e 'l duca mio,
su per lo scoglio infino in su l'altr' arco
che cuopre 'l fosso in che si paga il fio
a quei che scommettendo acquistan carco.



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CANTO XXVIII

Who, even with untrammeled words and many
attempts at telling, ever could recount
in full the blood and wounds that I now saw?
  Each tongue that tried would certainly fall short
because the shallowness of both our speech
and intellect cannot contain so much.
  Were you to reassemble all the men
who once, within Apulia's fateful land,
had mourned their blood, shed at the Trojans' hands,
  as well as those who fell in the long war
where massive mounds of rings were battle spoils—
even as Livy writes, who does not err—
  and those who felt the thrust of painful blows
when they fought hard against Robert Guiscard;
with all the rest whose bones are still piled up
  at Ceperano—each Apulian was
a traitor there—and, too, at Tagliacozzo,
where old Alardo conquered without weapons;
  and then, were one to show his limb pierced through
and one his limb hacked off, that would not match
the hideousness of the ninth abyss.
  No barrel, even though it's lost a hoop
or end-piece, ever gapes as one whom I
saw ripped right from his chin to where we fart:
  his bowels hung between his legs, one saw
his vitals and the miserable sack
that makes of what we swallow excrement.
  While I was all intent on watching him,
he looked at me, and with his hands he spread
his chest and said: "See how I split myself!
  See now how maimed Mohammed is! And he
who walks and weeps before me is Alì,
whose face is opened wide from chin to forelock.

The Eighth Circle, Ninth Pouch, where the Sowers of Scandal and Schism, perpetually circling, are wounded and—after each healing—wounded again by a demon with a sword. Mohammed and Alì. Warning to Fra Dolcino. Curio. Mosca. Bertran de Born.

Chi poria mai pur con parole sciolte
dicer del sangue e de le piaghe a pieno
ch'i' ora vidi, per narrar più volte?
  Ogne lingua per certo verria meno
per lo nostro sermone e per la mente
c'hanno a tanto comprender poco seno.
  S'el s'aunasse ancor tutta la gente
che già, in su la fortunata terra
di Puglia, fu del suo sangue dolente
  per li Troiani e per la lunga guerra
che de l'anella fé sì alte spoglie,
come Livïo scrive, che non erra,
  con quella che sentio di colpi doglie
per contastare a Ruberto Guiscardo;
e l'altra il cui ossame ancor s'accoglie
  a Ceperan, là dove fu bugiardo
ciascun Pugliese, e là da Tagliacozzo,
dove sanz' arme vinse il vecchio Alardo;
  e qual forato suo membro e qual mozzo
mostrasse, d'aequar sarebbe nulla
il modo de la nona bolgia sozzo.
  Già veggia, per mezzul perdere o lulla,
com' io vidi un, così non si pertugia,
rotto dal mento infin dove si trulla.
  Tra le gambe pendevan le minugia;
la corata pareva e 'l tristo sacco
che merda fa di quel che si trangugia.
  Mentre che tutto in lui veder m'attacco,
guardommi e con le man s'aperse il petto,
dicendo: "Or vedi com' io mi dilacco!
  vedi come storpiato è Mäometto!
Dinanzi a me sen va piangendo Alì,
fesso nel volto dal mento al ciuffetto.

And all the others here whom you can see
were, when alive, the sowers of dissension
and scandal, and for this they now are split.
Behind us here, a devil decks us out
so cruelly, re-placing every one
of this throng underneath the sword edge when
we've made our way around the road of pain,
because our wounds have closed again before
we have returned to meet his blade once more.
But who are you who dawdle on this ridge,
perhaps to slow your going to the verdict
that was pronounced on your self-accusations?"
"Death has not reached him yet," my master answered,
"nor is it guilt that summons him to torment;
but that he may gain full experience,
I, who am dead, must guide him here below,
to circle after circle, throughout Hell:
this is as true as that I speak to you."
More than a hundred, when they heard him, stopped
within the ditch and turned to look at me,
forgetful of their torture, wondering.
"Then you, who will perhaps soon see the sun,
tell Fra Dolcino to provide himself
with food, if he has no desire to join me
here quickly, lest when snow besieges him,
it bring the Novarese the victory
that otherwise they would not find too easy."
When he had raised his heel, as if to go,
Mohammed said these words to me, and then
he set it on the ground and off he went.
Another sinner, with his throat slit through
and with his nose hacked off up to his eyebrows,
and no more than a single ear remaining,
had—with the others—stayed his steps in wonder;
he was the first, before the rest, to open
his windpipe—on the outside, all bloodred—
and said: "O you whom guilt does not condemn,
and whom, unless too close resemblance cheats me,
I've seen above upon Italian soil,
remember Pier da Medicina if
you ever see again the gentle plain
that from Vercelli slopes to Marcabò.

E tutti li altri che tu vedi qui,
seminator di scandalo e di scisma
fuor vivi, e però son fessi così.
Un diavolo è qua dietro che n'accisma
sì crudelmente, al taglio de la spada
rimettendo ciascun di questa risma,
quand' avem volta la dolente strada;
però che le ferite son richiuse
prima ch'altri dinanzi li rivada.
Ma tu chi se' che 'n su lo scoglio muse,
forse per indugiar d'ire a la pena
ch'è giudicata in su le tue accuse?"
"Né morte 'l giunse ancor, né colpa 'l mena,"
rispuose 'l mio maestro, "a tormentarlo;
ma per dar lui esperïenza piena,
a me, che morto son, convien menarlo
per lo 'nferno qua giù di giro in giro;
e quest' è ver così com' io ti parlo."
Più fuor di cento che, quando l'udiro,
s'arrestaron nel fosso a riguardarmi
per maraviglia, oblïando il martiro.
"Or dì a fra Dolcin dunque che s'armi,
tu che forse vedra' il sole in breve,
s'ello non vuol qui tosto seguitarmi,
sì di vivanda, che stretta di neve
non rechi la vittoria al Noarese,
ch'altrimenti acquistar non saria leve."
Poi che l'un piè per girsene sospese,
Mäometto mi disse esta parola;
indi a partirsi in terra lo distese.
Un altro, che forata avea la gola
e tronco 'l naso infin sotto le ciglia,
e non avea mai ch'una orecchia sola,
ristato a riguardar per maraviglia
con li altri, innanzi a li altri aprì la canna,
ch'era di fuor d'ogne parte vermiglia,
e disse: "O tu cui colpa non condanna
e cu' io vidi in su terra latina,
se troppa simiglianza non m'inganna,
rimembriti di Pier da Medicina,
se mai torni a veder lo dolce piano
che da Vercelli a Marcabò dichina.

And let the two best men of Fano know—
I mean both Messer Guido and Angiolello—
that, if the foresight we have here's not vain,
they will be cast out of their ship and drowned,
weighed down with stones, near La Cattolica,
because of a foul tyrant's treachery.
Between the isles of Cyprus and Majorca,
Neptune has never seen so cruel a crime
committed by the pirates or the Argives.
That traitor who sees only with one eye
and rules the land which one who's here with me
would wish his sight had never seen, will call
Guido and Angiolello to a parley,
and then will so arrange it that they'll need
no vow or prayer to Focara's wind!"
And I to him: "If you would have me carry
some news of you above, then tell and show me
who so detests the sight of Rimini."
And then he set his hand upon the jaw
of a companion, opening his mouth
and shouting: "This is he, and he speaks not.
A man cast out, he quenched the doubt in Caesar,
insisting that the one who is prepared
can only suffer harm if he delays."
Oh, how dismayed and pained he seemed to me,
his tongue slit in his gullet: Curio,
who once was so audacious in his talk!
And one who walked with both his hands hacked off,
while lifting up his stumps through the dark air,
so that his face was hideous with blood,
cried out: "You will remember Mosca, too,
who said—alas—'What's done is at an end,'
which was the seed of evil for the Tuscans."
I added: "—and brought death to your own kinsmen";
then having heard me speak, grief heaped on grief,
he went his way as one gone mad with sadness.
But I stayed there to watch that company
and saw a thing that I should be afraid
to tell with no more proof than my own self—
except that I am reassured by conscience,
that good companion, heartening a man
beneath the breastplate of its purity.

E fa sapere a' due miglior da Fano,
a messer Guido e anco ad Angiolello,
che, se l'antiveder qui non è vano,
gittati saran fuor di lor vasello
e mazzerati presso a la Cattolica
per tradimento d'un tiranno fello.
Tra l'isola di Cipri e di Maiolica
non vide mai sì gran fallo Nettuno,
non da pirate, non da gente argolica.
Quel traditor che vede pur con l'uno,
e tien la terra che tale qui meco
vorrebbe di vedere esser digiuno,
farà venirli a parlamento seco;
poi farà sì, ch'al vento di Focara
non sarà lor mestier voto né preco."
E io a lui: "Dimostrami e dichiara,
se vuo' ch'i' porti sù di te novella,
chi è colui da la veduta amara."
Allor puose la mano a la mascella
d'un suo compagno e la bocca li aperse,
gridando: "Questi è desso, e non favella.
Questi, scacciato, il dubitar sommerse
in Cesare, affermando che 'l fornito
sempre con danno l'attender sofferse."
Oh quanto mi pareva sbigottito
con la lingua tagliata ne la strozza
Curïo, ch'a dir fu così ardito!
E un ch'avea l'una e l'altra man mozza,
levando i moncherin per l'aura fosca,
sì che 'l sangue facea la faccia sozza,
gridò: "Ricordera'ti anche del Mosca,
che disse, lasso!, 'Capo ha cosa fatta,'
che fu mal seme per la gente tosca."
E io li aggiunsi: "E morte di tua schiatta";
per ch'elli, accumulando duol con duolo,
sen gio come persona trista e matta.
Ma io rimasi a riguardar lo stuolo,
e vidi cosa ch'io avrei paura,
sanza più prova, di contarla solo;
se non che coscïenza m'assicura,
la buona compagnia che l'uom francheggia
sotto l'asbergo del sentirsi pura.

I surely saw, and it still seems I see,
a trunk without a head that walked just like
the others in that melancholy herd;
it carried by the hair its severed head,
which swayed within its hand just like a lantern;
and that head looked at us and said: "Ah me!"
Out of itself it made itself a lamp,
and they were two in one and one in two;
how that can be, He knows who so decrees.
When it was just below the bridge, it lifted
its arm together with its head, so that
its words might be more near us, words that said:
"Now you can see atrocious punishment,
you who, still breathing, go to view the dead:
see if there's any pain as great as this.
And so that you may carry news of me,
know that I am Bertran de Born, the one
who gave bad counsel to the fledgling king.
I made the son and father enemies:
Achitophel with his malicious urgings
did not do worse with Absalom and David.
Because I severed those so joined, I carry—
alas—my brain dissevered from its source,
which is within my trunk. And thus, in me
one sees the law of counter-penalty."

Io vidi certo, e ancor par ch'io 'l veggia,
un busto sanza capo andar sì come
andavan li altri de la trista greggia;
e 'l capo tronco tenea per le chiome,
pesol con mano a guisa di lanterna:
e quel mirava noi e dicea: "Oh me!"
Di sé facea a sé stesso lucerna,
ed eran due in uno e uno in due;
com' esser può, quei sa che sì governa.
Quando diritto al piè del ponte fue,
levò 'l braccio alto con tutta la testa
per appressarne le parole sue,
che fuoro: "Or vedi la pena molesta,
tu che, spirando, vai veggendo i morti:
vedi s'alcuna è grande come questa.
E perché tu di me novella porti,
sappi ch'i' son Bertram dal Bornio, quelli
che diedi al re giovane i ma' conforti.
Io feci il padre e 'l figlio in sé ribelli;
Achitofèl non fé più d'Absalone
e di Davìd coi malvagi punzelli.
Perch' io partì così giunte persone,
partito porto il mio cerebro, lasso!,
dal suo principio ch'è in questo troncone.
Così s'osserva in me lo contrapasso."

CANTO XXIX

So many souls and such outlandish wounds
had made my eyes inebriate—they longed
to stay and weep. But Virgil said to me:
"Why are you staring so insistently?
Why does your vision linger there below
among the lost and mutilated shadows?
You did not do so at the other moats.
If you would count them all, consider: twenty-
two miles make up the circuit of the valley.
The moon already is beneath our feet;
the time alloted to us now is short,
and there is more to see than you see here."
"Had you," I answered him without a pause,
"been able to consider why I looked,
you might have granted me a longer stay."
Meanwhile my guide had moved ahead; I went
behind him, answering as I walked on,
and adding: "In that hollow upon which
just now, I kept my eyes intent, I think
a spirit born of my own blood laments
the guilt which, down below, costs one so much."
At this my master said: "Don't let your thoughts
about him interrupt you from here on:
attend to other things, let him stay there;
for I saw him below the little bridge,
his finger pointing at you, threatening,
and heard him called by name—Geri del Bello.
But at that moment you were occupied
with him who once was lord of Hautefort;
you did not notice Geri—he moved off."
"My guide, it was his death by violence,
for which he still is not avenged," I said,
"by anyone who shares his shame, that made

Still the Eighth Circle, Ninth Pouch: the Sowers of Scandal and Schism. Geri del Bello, an unavenged ancestor of Dante. The Tenth Pouch: the Falsifiers. The First Group, Falsifiers of Metals (Alchemists), plagued by scabs, lying on the earth, scratching furiously. Griffolino. Capocchio.

La molta gente e le diverse piaghe
avean le luci mie sì inebrïate,
che de lo stare a piangere eran vaghe.
Ma Virgilio mi disse: "Che pur guate?
perché la vista tua pur si soffolge
là giù tra l'ombre triste smozzicate?
Tu non hai fatto sì a l'altre bolge;
pensa, se tu annoverar le credi,
che miglia ventidue la valle volge.
E già la luna è sotto i nostri piedi;
lo tempo è poco omai che n'è concesso,
e altro è da veder che tu non vedi."
"Se tu avessi," rispuos' io appresso,
"atteso a la cagion per ch'io guardava,
forse m'avresti ancor lo star dimesso."
Parte sen giva, e io retro li andava,
lo duca, già faccendo la risposta,
e soggiugnendo: "Dentro a quella cava
dov' io tenea or li occhi sì a posta,
credo ch'un spirto del mio sangue pianga
la colpa che là giù cotanto costa."
Allor disse 'l maestro: "Non si franga
lo tuo pensier da qui innanzi sovr' ello.
Attendi ad altro, ed ei là si rimanga;
ch'io vidi lui a piè del ponticello
mostrarti e minacciar forte col dito,
e udi' 'l nominar Geri del Bello.
Tu eri allor sì del tutto impedito
sovra colui che già tenne Altaforte,
che non guardasti in là, sì fu partito."
"O duca mio, la vïolenta morte
che non li è vendicata ancor," diss' io,
"per alcun che de l'onta sia consorte,

him so disdainful now; and—I suppose—
for this he left without a word to me,
and this has made me pity him the more."
And so we talked until we found the first
point of the ridge that, if there were more light,
would show the other valley to the bottom.
When we had climbed above the final cloister
of Malebolge, so that its lay brothers
were able to appear before our eyes,
I felt the force of strange laments, like arrows
whose shafts are barbed with pity; and at this,
I had to place my hands across my ears.
Just like the sufferings that all the sick
of Val di Chiana's hospitals, Maremma's,
Sardina's, from July until September
would muster if assembled in one ditch—
so was it here, and such a stench rose up
as usually comes from festering limbs.
And keeping always to the left, we climbed
down to the final bank of the long ridge,
and then my sight could see more vividly
into the bottom, where unerring Justice,
the minister of the High Lord, punishes
the falsifiers she had registered.
I do not think that there was greater grief
in seeing all Aegina's people sick
(then, when the air was so infected that
all animals, down to the little worm,
collapsed; and afterward, as poets hold
to be the certain truth, those ancient peoples
received their health again through seed of ants)
than I felt when I saw, in that dark valley,
the spirits languishing in scattered heaps.
Some lay upon their bellies, some upon
the shoulders of another spirit, some
crawled on all fours along that squalid road.
We journeyed step by step without a word,
watching and listening to those sick souls,
who had not strength enough to lift themselves.
I saw two sitting propped against each other—
as pan is propped on pan to heat them up—
and each, from head to foot, spotted with scabs;

fece lui disdegnoso; ond' el sen gio
sanza parlarmi, sì com' ïo estimo:
e in ciò m'ha el fatto a sé più pio."
Così parlammo infino al loco primo
che de lo scoglio l'altra valle mostra,
se più lume vi fosse, tutto ad imo.
Quando noi fummo sor l'ultima chiostra
di Malebolge, sì che suoi conversi
potean parere a la veduta nostra,
lamenti saettaron me diversi,
che di pietà ferrati avean li strali;
ond' io li orecchi con le man copersi.
Qual dolor fora, se de li spedali
di Valdichiana tra 'l luglio e 'l settembre
e di Maremma e di Sardigna i mali
fossero in una fossa tutti 'nsembre,
tal era quivi, e tal puzzo n'usciva
qual suol venir de le marcite membre.
Noi discendemmo in su l'ultima riva
del lungo scoglio, pur da man sinistra;
e allor fu la mia vista più viva
giù ver' lo fondo, là 've la ministra
de l'alto Sire infallibil giustizia
punisce i falsador che qui registra.
Non credo ch'a veder maggior tristizia
fosse in Egina il popol tutto infermo,
quando fu l'aere sì pien di malizia,
che li animali, infino al picciol vermo,
cascaron tutti, e poi le genti antiche,
secondo che i poeti hanno per fermo,
si ristorar di seme di formiche;
ch'era a veder per quella oscura valle
languir li 'spirti per diverse biche.
Qual sovra 'l ventre e qual sovra le spalle
l'un de l'altro giacea, e qual carpone
si trasmutava per lo tristo calle.
Passo passo andavam sanza sermone,
guardando e ascoltando li ammalati,
che non potean levar le lor persone.
Io vidi due sedere a sé poggiati,
com' a scaldar si poggia tegghia a tegghia,
dal capo al piè di schianze macolati;

and I have never seen a stableboy
whose master waits for him, or one who stays
awake reluctantly, so ply a horse
with currycomb, as they assailed themselves
with clawing nails—their itching had such force
and fury, and there was no other help.
And so their nails kept scraping off the scabs,
just as a knife scrapes off the scales of carp
or of another fish with scales more large.
"O you who use your nails to strip yourself,"
my guide began to say to one of them,
"and sometimes have to turn them into pincers,
tell us if there are some Italians
among the sinners in this moat—so may
your nails hold out, eternal, at their work."
"We two whom you see so disfigured here,
we are Italians," one said, in tears.
"But who are you who have inquired of us?"
My guide replied: "From circle down to circle,
together with this living man, I am
one who descends; I mean to show him Hell."
At this their mutual support broke off;
and, quivering, each spirit turned toward me
with others who, by chance, had heard his words.
Then my good master drew more close to me,
saying: "Now tell them what it is you want."
And I began to speak, just as he wished:
"So that your memory may never fade
within the first world from the minds of men,
but still live on—and under many suns—
do tell me who you are and from what city,
and do not let your vile and filthy torment
make you afraid to let me know your names."
One answered me: "My city was Arezzo
and Albero of Siena had me burned;
but what I died for does not bring me here.
It's true that I had told him—jestingly—
'I'd know enough to fly through air'; and he,
with curiosity, but little sense,
wished me to show that art to him and, just
because I had not made him Daedalus,
had one who held him as a son burn me.

e non vidi già mai menare stregghia
a ragazzo aspettato dal segnorso,
né a colui che mal volontier vegghia,
come ciascun menava spesso il morso
de l'unghie sopra sé per la gran rabbia
del pizzicor, che non ha più soccorso;
e sì traevan giù l'unghie la scabbia,
come coltel di scardova le scaglie
o d'altro pesce che più larghe l'abbia.
"O tu che con le dita ti dismaglie,"
cominciò 'l duca mio a l'un di loro,
"e che fai d'esse tal volta tanaglie,
dinne s'alcun Latino è tra costoro
che son quinc' entro, se l'unghia ti basti
etternalmente a cotesto lavoro."
"Latin siam noi, che tu vedi sì guasti
qui ambedue," rispuose l'un piangendo;
"ma tu chi se' che di noi dimandasti?"
E 'l duca disse: "I' son un che discendo
con questo vivo giù di balzo in balzo,
e di mostrar lo 'nferno a lui intendo."
Allor si ruppe lo comun rincalzo;
e tremando ciascuno a me si volse
con altri che l'udiron di rimbalzo.
Lo buon maestro a me tutto s'accolse,
dicendo: "Dì a lor ciò che tu vuoli";
e io incominciai, poscia ch'ei volse:
"Se la vostra memoria non s'imboli
nel primo mondo da l'umane menti,
ma s'ella viva sotto molti soli,
ditemi chi voi siete e di che genti;
la vostra sconcia e fastidiosa pena
di palesarvi a me non vi spaventi."
"Io fui d'Arezzo, e Albero da Siena,"
rispuose l'un, "mi fé mettere al foco;
ma quel per ch'io mori' qui non mi mena.
Vero è ch'i' dissi lui, parlando a gioco:
'I' mi saprei levar per l'aere a volo';
e quei, ch'avea vaghezza e senno poco,
volle ch'i' li mostrassi l'arte; e solo
perch' io nol feci Dedalo, mi fece
ardere a tal che l'avea per figliuolo.

But Minos, who cannot mistake, condemned
my spirit to the final pouch of ten
for alchemy I practiced in the world."
And then I asked the poet: "Was there ever
so vain a people as the Sienese?
Even the French can't match such vanity."
At this, the other leper, who had heard me,
replied to what I'd said: "Except for Stricca,
for he knew how to spend most frugally;
and Niccolò, the first to make men see
that cloves can serve as luxury (such seed,
in gardens where it suits, can take fast root);
and, too, Caccia d'Asciano's company,
with whom he squandered vineyards and tilled fields,
while Abbagliato showed such subtlety.
But if you want to know who joins you so
against the Sienese, look hard at me—
that way, my face can also answer rightly—
and see that I'm the shade of that Capocchio
whose alchemy could counterfeit fine metals.
And you, if I correctly take your measure,
recall how apt I was at aping nature."

Ma ne l'ultima bolgia de le diece
me per l'alchìmia che nel mondo usai
dannò Minòs, a cui fallar non lece."
E io dissi al poeta: "Or fu già mai
gente sì vana come la sanese?
Certo non la francesca sì d'assai!"
Onde l'altro lebbroso, che m'intese,
rispuose al detto mio: "Tra'mene Stricca
che seppe far le temperate spese,
e Niccolò che la costuma ricca
del garofano prima discoverse
ne l'orto dove tal seme s'appicca;
e tra'ne la brigata in che disperse
Caccia d'Ascian la vigna e la gran fonda,
e l'Abbagliato suo senno proferse.
Ma perché sappi chi sì ti seconda
contra i Sanesi, aguzza ver' me l'occhio,
sì che la faccia mia ben ti risponda:
sì vedrai ch'io son l'ombra di Capocchio,
che falsai li metalli con l'alchìmia;
e te dee ricordar, se ben t'adocchio,
com' io fui di natura buona scimia."



XXIX ·73·84

EPHIALTES



CANTO XXX

When Juno was incensed with Semele
and, thus, against the Theban family
had shown her fury time and time again,
then Athamas was driven so insane
that, seeing both his wife and their two sons,
as she bore one upon each arm, he cried:
"Let's spread the nets, to take the lioness
together with her cubs along the pass";
and he stretched out his talons, pitiless,
and snatched the son who bore the name Learchus,
whirled him around and dashed him on a rock;
she, with her other burden, drowned herself.
And after fortune turned against the pride
of Troy, which had dared all, so that the king
together with his kingdom, was destroyed,
then Hecuba was wretched, sad, a captive;
and after she had seen Polyxena
dead and, in misery, had recognized
her Polydorus lying on the shore,
she barked, out of her senses, like a dog—
her agony had so deformed her mind.
But neither fury—Theban, Trojan—ever
was seen to be so cruel against another,
in rending beasts and even human limbs,
as were two shades I saw, both pale and naked,
who, biting, ran berserk in just the way
a hog does when it's let loose from its sty.
The one came at Capocchio and sank
his tusks into his neck so that, by dragging,
he made the hard ground scrape against his belly.
And he who stayed behind, the Aretine,
trembled and said: "That phantom's Gianni Schicchi,
and he goes raging, rending others so."

Still the Eighth Circle, Tenth Pouch: the Falsifiers. Gianni Schicci and Myrrha in the Second Group, Counterfeiters of Others' Persons. Master Adam in the Third Group, Counterfeiters of Coins. Potiphar's wife and Sinon the Greek in the Fourth Group, Falsifiers of Words, Liars. The quarrel between Adam and Sinon.

Nel tempo che Iunone era crucciata
per Semelè contra 'l sangue tebano,
come mostrò una e altra fïata,
  Atamante divenne tanto insano,
che veggendo la moglie con due figli
andar carcata da ciascuna mano,
  gridò: "Tendiam le reti, sì ch'io pigli
la leonessa e ' leoncini al varco";
e poi distese i dispietati artigli,
  prendendo l'un ch'avea nome Learco,
e rotollo e percosselo ad un sasso;
e quella s'annegò con l'altro carco.
  E quando la fortuna volse in basso
l'altezza de' Troian che tutto ardiva,
sì che 'nsieme col regno il re fu casso,
  Ecuba trista, misera e cattiva,
poscia che vide Polissena morta,
e del suo Polidoro in su la riva
  del mar si fu la dolorosa accorta,
forsennata latrò sì come cane;
tanto il dolor le fé la mente torta.
  Ma né di Tebe furie né troiane
si vider mäi in alcun tanto crude,
non punger bestie, nonché membra umane,
  quant' io vidi in due ombre smorte e nude,
che mordendo correvan di quel modo
che 'l porco quando del porcil si schiude.
  L'una giunse a Capocchio, e in sul nodo
del collo l'assannò, sì che, tirando,
grattar li fece il ventre al fondo sodo.
  E l'Aretin che rimase, tremando
mi disse: "Quel folletto è Gianni Schicchi,
e va rabbioso altrui così conciando."

And, "Oh," I said to him, "so may the other
not sink its teeth in you, please tell me who
it is before it hurries off from here."
And he to me: "That is the ancient soul
of the indecent Myrrha, she who loved
her father past the limits of just love.
She came to sin with him by falsely taking
another's shape upon herself, just as
the other phantom who goes there had done,
that he might gain the lady of the herd,
when he disguised himself as Buoso Donati,
making a will as if most properly."
And when the pair of raging ones had passed,
those two on whom my eyes were fixed, I turned
around to see the rest of the ill-born.
I saw one who'd be fashioned like a lute
if he had only had his groin cut off
from that part of his body where it forks.
The heavy dropsy, which so disproportions
the limbs with unassimilated humors
that there's no match between the face and belly,
had made him part his lips like a consumptive,
who will, because of thirst, let one lip drop
down to his chin and lift the other up.
"O you exempt from every punishment
in this grim world, and I do not know why,"
he said to us, "look now and pay attention
to this, the misery of Master Adam:
alive, I had enough of all I wanted;
alas, I now long for one drop of water.
The rivulets that fall into the Arno
down from the green hills of the Casentino
with channels cool and moist, are constantly
before me; I am racked by memory—
the image of their flow parches me more
than the disease that robs my face of flesh.
The rigid Justice that would torment me
uses, as most appropriate, the place
where I had sinned, to draw swift sighs from me.
There is Romena, there I counterfeited
the currency that bears the Baptist's seal;
for this I left my body, burned, above.

"Oh," diss' io lui, "se l'altro non ti ficchi
li denti a dosso, non ti sia fatica
a dir chi è, pria che di qui si spicchi."
Ed elli a me: "Quell' è l'anima antica
di Mirra scellerata, che divenne
al padre, fuor del dritto amore, amica.
Questa a peccar con esso così venne,
falsificando sé in altrui forma,
come l'altro che là sen va, sostenne,
per guadagnar la donna de la torma,
falsificare in sé Buoso Donati,
testando e dando al testamento norma."
E poi che i due rabbiosi fuor passati
sovra cu' io avea l'occhio tenuto,
rivolsilo a guardar li altri mal nati.
Io vidi un, fatto a guisa di lëuto,
pur ch'elli avesse avuta l'anguinaia
tronca da l'altro che l'uomo ha forcuto.
La grave idropesì, che sì dispaia
le membra con l'omor che mal converte,
che 'l viso non risponde a la ventraia,
faceva lui tener le labbra aperte
come l'etico fa, che per la sete
l'un verso 'l mento e l'altro in sù rinverte.
"O voi che sanz' alcuna pena siete,
e non so io perché, nel mondo gramo,"
diss' elli a noi, "guardate e attendete
a la miseria del maestro Adamo:
io ebbi, vivo, assai di quel ch'i' volli,
e ora, lasso!, un gocciol d'acqua bramo.
Li ruscelletti che d'i verdi colli
del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
faccendo i lor canali freddi e molli,
sempre mi stanno innanzi, e non indarno,
ché l'imagine lor vie più m'asciuga
che 'l male ond' io nel volto mi discarno.
La rigida giustizia che mi fruga
tragge cagion del loco ov' io peccai
a metter più li miei sospiri in fuga.
Ivi è Romena, là dov' io falsai
la lega suggellata del Batista;
per ch'io il corpo sù arso lasciai.

But could I see the miserable souls
of Guido, Alessandro, or their brother,
I'd not give up the sight for Fonte Branda.
And one of them is in this moat already,
if what the angry shades report is true.
What use is that to me whose limbs are tied?
Were I so light that, in a hundred years,
I could advance an inch, I should already
be well upon the road to search for him
among the mutilated ones, although
this circuit measures some eleven miles
and is at least a half a mile across.
Because of them I'm in this family;
it was those three who had incited me
to coin the florins with three carats' dross."
And I to him: "Who are those two poor sinners
who give off smoke like wet hands in the winter
and lie so close to you upon the right?"
"I found them here," he answered, "when I rained
down to this rocky slope; they've not stirred since
and will not move, I think, eternally.
One is the lying woman who blamed Joseph;
the other, lying Sinon, Greek from Troy:
because of raging fever they reek so."
And one of them, who seemed to take offense,
perhaps at being named so squalidly,
struck with his fist at Adam's rigid belly.
It sounded as if it had been a drum;
and Master Adam struck him in the face,
using his arm, which did not seem less hard,
saying to him: "Although I cannot move
my limbs because they are too heavy, I
still have an arm that's free to serve that need."
And he replied: "But when you went to burning,
your arm was not as quick as it was now;
though when you coined, it was as quick and more."
To which the dropsied one: "Here you speak true;
but you were not so true a witness there,
when you were asked to tell the truth at Troy."
"If I spoke false, you falsified the coin,"
said Sinon; "I am here for just one crime—
but you've committed more than any demon."

Ma s'io vedessi qui l'anima trista
di Guido o d'Alessandro o di lor frate,
per Fonte Branda non darei la vista.
Dentro c'è l'una già, se l'arrabbiate
ombre che vanno intorno dicon vero;
ma che mi val, c'ho le membra legate?
S'io fossi pur di tanto ancor leggero
ch'i' potessi in cent' anni andare un'oncia,
io sarei messo già per lo sentiero,
cercando lui tra questa gente sconcia,
con tutto ch'ella volge undici miglia,
e men d'un mezzo di traverso non ci ha.
Io son per lor tra sì fatta famiglia;
e' m'indussero a batter li fiorini
ch'avevan tre carati di mondiglia."
E io a lui: "Chi son li due tapini
che fumman come man bagnate 'l verno,
giacendo stretti a' tuoi destri confini?"
"Qui li trovai—e poi volta non dierno—,"
rispuose, "quando piovvi in questo greppo,
e non credo che dieno in sempiterno.
L'una è la falsa ch'accusò Gioseppo;
l'altr' è 'l falso Sinon greco di Troia:
per febbre aguta gittan tanto leppo."
E l'un di lor, che si recò a noia
forse d'esser nomato sì oscuro,
col pugno li percosse l'epa croia.
Quella sonò come fosse un tamburo;
e mastro Adamo li percosse il volto
col braccio suo, che non parve men duro,
dicendo a lui: "Ancor che mi sia tolto
lo muover per le membra che son gravi,
ho io il braccio a tal mestiere sciolto."
Ond' ei rispuose: "Quando tu andavi
al fuoco, non l'avei tu così presto;
ma sì e più l'avei quando coniavi."
E l'idropico: "Tu di' ver di questo:
ma tu non fosti sì ver testimonio
là 've del ver fosti a Troia richesto."
"S'io dissi falso, e tu falsasti il conio,"
disse Sinon; "e son qui per un fallo,
e tu per più ch'alcun altro demonio!"

"Do not forget the horse, you perjurer,"
replied the one who had the bloated belly,
"may you be plagued because the whole world knows it."
The Greek: "And you be plagued by thirst that cracks
your tongue, and putrid water that has made
your belly such a hedge before your eyes."
And then the coiner: "So, as usual,
your mouth, because of racking fever, gapes;
for if I thirst and if my humor bloats me,
you have both dryness and a head that aches;
few words would be sufficient invitation
to have you lick the mirror of Narcissus."
I was intent on listening to them
when this was what my master said: "If you
insist on looking more, I'll quarrel with you!"
And when I heard him speak so angrily,
I turned around to him with shame so great
that it still stirs within my memory.
Even as one who dreams that he is harmed
and, dreaming, wishes he were dreaming, thus
desiring that which is, as if it were not,
so I became within my speechlessness:
I wanted to excuse myself and did
excuse myself, although I knew it not.
"Less shame would wash away a greater fault
than was your fault," my master said to me;
"therefore release yourself from all remorse
and see that I am always at your side,
should it so happen—once again—that fortune
brings you where men would quarrel in this fashion:
to want to hear such bickering is base."

"Ricorditi, spergiuro, del cavallo,"
rispuose quel ch'avëa infiata l'epa;
"e sieti reo che tutto il mondo sallo!"
"E te sia rea la sete onde ti crepa,"
disse 'l Greco, "la lingua, e l'acqua marcia
che 'l ventre innanzi a li occhi sì t'assiepa!"
Allora il monetier: "Così si squarcia
la bocca tua per tuo mal come suole;
ché, s'i' ho sete e omor mi rinfarcia,
tu hai l'arsura e 'l capo che ti duole,
e per leccar lo specchio di Narcisso,
non vorresti a 'nvitar molte parole."
Ad ascoltarli er' io del tutto fisso,
quando 'l maestro mi disse: "Or pur mira,
che per poco che teco non mi risso!"
Quand' io 'l senti' a me parlar con ira,
volsimi verso lui con tal vergogna,
ch'ancor per la memoria mi si gira.
Qual è colui che suo dannaggio sogna,
che sognando desidera sognare,
sì che quel ch'è, come non fosse, agogna,
tal mi fec' io, non possendo parlare,
che disïava scusarmi, e scusava
me tuttavia, e nol mi credea fare.
"Maggior difetto men vergogna lava,"
disse 'l maestro, "che 'l tuo non è stato;
però d'ogne trestizia ti disgrava.
E fa ragion ch'io ti sia sempre allato,
se più avvien che fortuna t'accoglia
dove sien genti in simigliante piato:
ché voler ciò udire è bassa voglia."

CANTO XXXI

The very tongue that first had wounded me,
sending the color up in both my cheeks,
was then to cure me with its medicine—
as did Achilles' and his father's lance,
even as I have heard, when it dispensed
a sad stroke first and then a healing one.
We turned our backs upon that dismal valley
by climbing up the bank that girdles it;
we made our way across without a word.
Here it was less than night and less than day,
so that my sight could only move ahead
slightly, but then I heard a bugle blast
so strong, it would have made a thunder clap
seem faint; at this, my eyes—which doubled back
upon their path—turned fully toward one place.
Not even Roland's horn, which followed on
the sad defeat when Charlemagne had lost
his holy army, was as dread as this.
I'd only turned my head there briefly when
I seemed to make out many high towers; then
I asked him: "Master, tell me, what's this city?"
And he to me: "It is because you try
to penetrate from far into these shadows
that you have formed such faulty images.
When you have reached that place, you shall see clearly
how much the distance has deceived your sense;
and, therefore, let this spur you on your way."
Then lovingly he took me by the hand
and said: "Before we have moved farther on,
so that the fact may seem less strange to you,
I'd have you know they are not towers, but giants,
and from the navel downward, all of them
are in the central pit, at the embankment."

Passage to the Ninth Circle. The central pit or well of Hell, where Cocytus, the last river of Hell, freezes. The Giants: Nimrod, Ephialtes, Briareus, Antaeus. Antaeus's compliance with Virgil's request to lower the two poets into the pit.

Una medesma lingua pria mi morse,
sì che mi tinse l'una e l'altra guancia,
e poi la medicina mi riporse;
così od' io che solea far la lancia
d'Achille e del suo padre esser cagione
prima di trista e poi di buona mancia.
Noi demmo il dosso al misero vallone
su per la ripa che 'l cinge dintorno,
attraversando sanza alcun sermone.
Quiv' era men che notte e men che giorno,
sì che 'l viso m'andava innanzi poco;
ma io senti' sonare un alto corno,
tanto ch'avrebbe ogne tuon fatto fioco,
che, contra sé la sua via seguitando,
dirizzò li occhi miei tutti ad un loco.
Dopo la dolorosa rotta, quando
Carlo Magno perdé la santa gesta,
non sonò sì terribilmente Orlando.
Poco portäi in là volta la testa,
che me parve veder molte alte torri;
ond' io: "Maestro, dì, che terra è questa?"
Ed elli a me: "Però che tu trascorri
per le tenebre troppo da la lungi,
avvien che poi nel maginare abborri.
Tu vedrai ben, se tu là ti congiungi,
quanto 'l senso s'inganna di lontano;
però alquanto più te stesso pungi."
Poi caramente mi prese per mano
e disse: "Pria che noi siam più avanti,
acciò che 'l fatto men ti paia strano,
sappi che non son torri, ma giganti,
e son nel pozzo intorno da la ripa
da l'umbilico in giuso tutti quanti."

Just as, whenever mists begin to thin,
when, gradually, vision finds the form
that in the vapor-thickened air was hidden,
so I pierced through the dense and darkened fog;
as I drew always nearer to the shore,
my error fled from me, my terror grew;
for as, on its round wall, Montereggione
is crowned with towers, so there towered here,
above the bank that runs around the pit,
with half their bulk, the terrifying giants,
whom Jove still menaces from Heaven when
he sends his bolts of thunder down upon them.
And I could now make out the face of one,
his shoulders and his chest, much of his belly,
and both his arms that hung along his sides.
Surely when she gave up the art of making
such creatures, Nature acted well indeed,
depriving Mars of instruments like these.
And if she still produces elephants
and whales, whoever sees with subtlety
holds her—for this—to be more just and prudent;
for where the mind's acutest reasoning
is joined to evil will and evil power,
there human beings can't defend themselves.
His face appeared to me as broad and long
as Rome can claim for its St. Peter's pine cone;
his other bones shared in that same proportion;
so that the bank, which served him as an apron
down from his middle, showed so much of him
above, that three Frieslanders would in vain
have boasted of their reaching to his hair;
for downward from the place where one would buckle
a mantle, I saw thirty spans of him.
"*Raphèl maì amècche zabì almi,*"
began to bellow that brute mouth, for which
no sweeter psalms would be appropriate.
And my guide turned to him: "O stupid soul,
keep to your horn and use that as an outlet
when rage or other passion touches you!
Look at your neck, and you will find the strap
that holds it fast; and see, bewildered spirit,
how it lies straight across your massive chest."

Come quando la nebbia si dissipa,
lo sguardo a poco a poco raffigura
ciò che cela 'l vapor che l'aere stipa,
così forando l'aura grossa e scura,
più e più appressando ver' la sponda,
fuggiemi errore e cresciemi paura;
però che, come su la cerchia tonda
Montereggion di torri si corona,
così la proda che 'l pozzo circonda
torreggiavan di mezza la persona
li orribili giganti, cui minaccia
Giove del cielo ancora quando tuona.
E io scorgeva già d'alcun la faccia,
le spalle e 'l petto e del ventre gran parte,
e per le coste giù ambo le braccia.
Natura certo, quando lasciò l'arte
di sì fatti animali, assai fé bene
per tòrre tali essecutori a Marte.
E s'ella d'elefanti e di balene
non si pente, chi guarda sottilmente,
più giusta e più discreta la ne tene;
ché dove l'argomento de la mente
s'aggiugne al mal volere e a la possa,
nessun riparo vi può far la gente.
La faccia sua mi parea lunga e grossa
come la pina di San Pietro a Roma,
e a sua proporzione eran l'altre ossa;
sì che la ripa, ch'era perizoma
dal mezzo in giù, ne mostrava ben tanto
di sovra, che di giugnere a la chioma
tre Frison s'averien dato mal vanto;
però ch'i' ne vedea trenta gran palmi
dal loco in giù dov' omo affibbia 'l manto.
"*Raphèl mai amècche zabì almi,*"
cominciò a gridar la fiera bocca,
cui non si convenia più dolci salmi.
E 'l duca mio ver' lui: "Anima sciocca,
tienti col corno, e con quel ti disfoga
quand' ira o altra passïon ti tocca!
Cércati al collo, e troverai la soga
che 'l tien legato, o anima confusa,
e vedi lui che 'l gran petto ti doga."

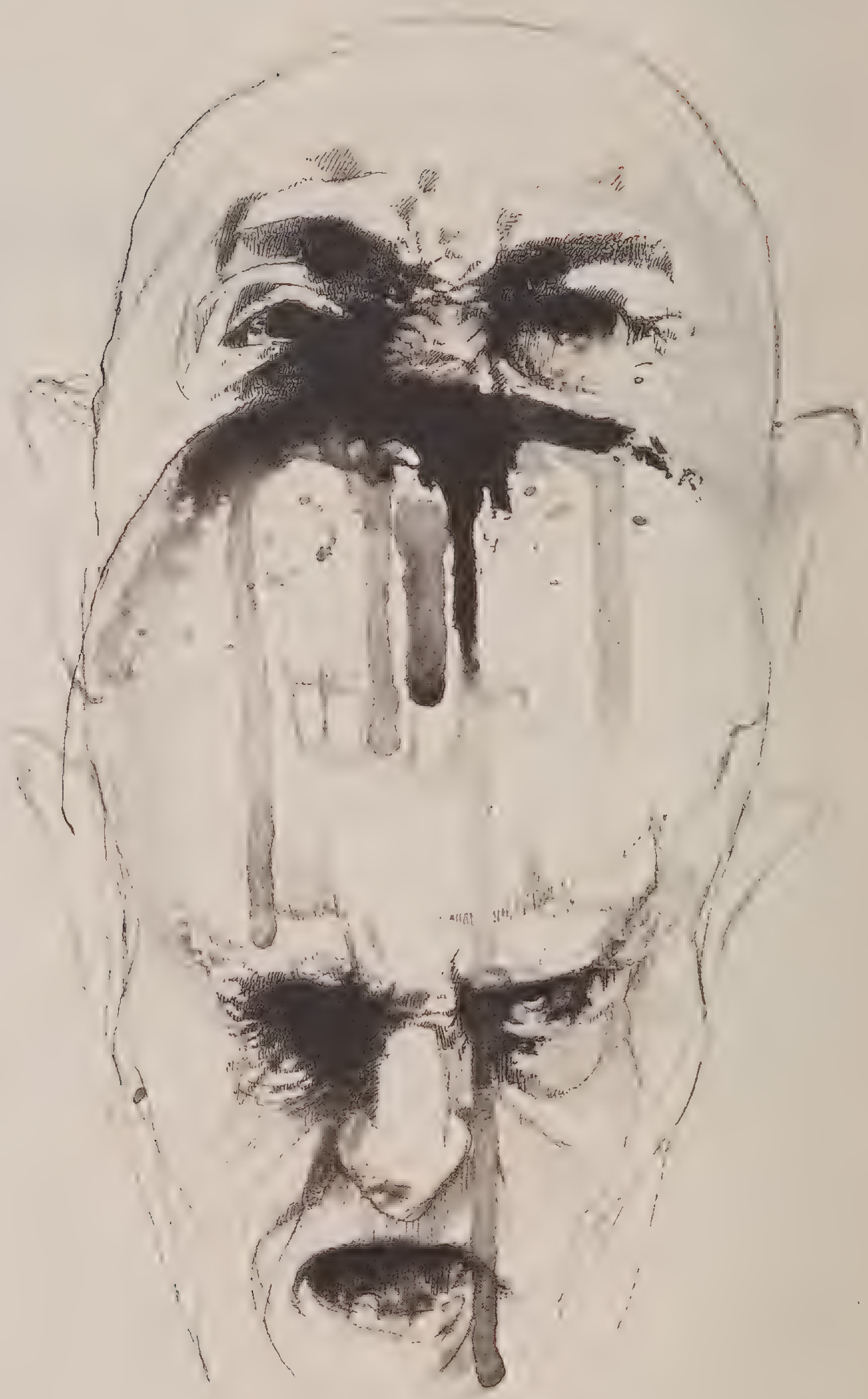
And then to me: "He is his own accuser;
for this is Nimrod, through whose wicked thought
one single language cannot serve the world.
Leave him alone—let's not waste time in talk;
for every language is to him the same
as his to others—no one knows his tongue."
So, turning to the left, we journeyed on
and, at the distance of a bow-shot, found
another giant, far more huge and fierce.
Who was the master who had tied him so,
I cannot say, but his left arm was bent
behind him and his right was bent in front,
both pinioned by a chain that held him tight
down from the neck; and round the part of him
that was exposed, it had been wound five times.
"This giant in his arrogance had tested
his force against the force of highest Jove,"
my guide said, "so he merits this reward.
His name is Ephialtes; and he showed
tremendous power when the giants frightened
the gods; the arms he moved now move no more."
And I to him: "If it is possible,
I'd like my eyes to have experience
of the enormous one, Briareus."
At which he answered: "You shall see Antaeus
nearby. He is unfettered and can speak;
he'll take us to the bottom of all evil.
The one you wish to see lies far beyond
and is bound up and just as huge as this one,
and even more ferocious in his gaze."
No earthquake ever was so violent
when called to shake a tower so robust,
as Ephialtes quick to shake himself.
Then I was more afraid of death than ever;
that fear would have been quite enough to kill me,
had I not seen how he was held by chains.
And we continued on until we reached
Antaeus, who, not reckoning his head,
stood out above the rock wall full five ells.
"O you, who lived within the famous valley
(where Scipio became the heir of glory
when Hannibal retreated with his men),

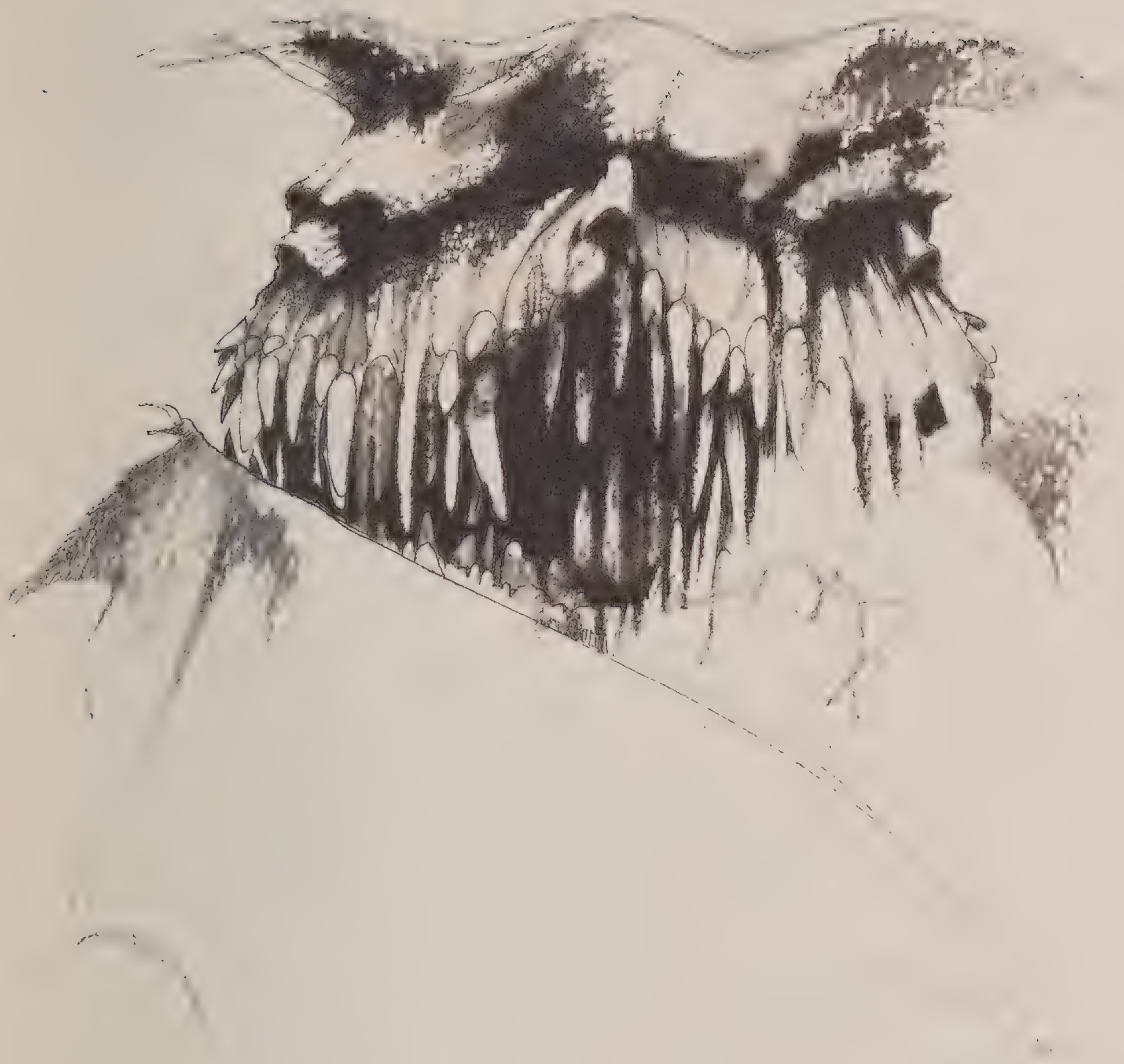
Poi disse a me: "Elli stessi s'accusa;
questi è Nembrotto per lo cui mal coto
pur un linguaggio nel mondo non s'usa.
Lasciànlo stare e non parliamo a vòto;
ché così è a lui ciascun linguaggio
come 'l suo ad altrui, ch'a nulla è noto."
Facemmo adunque più lungo vïaggio,
vòlti a sinistra; e al trar d'un balestro
trovammo l'altro assai più fero e maggio.
A cigner lui qual che fosse 'l maestro,
non so io dir, ma el tenea soccinto
dinanzi l'altro e dietro il braccio destro
d'una catena che 'l tenea avvinto
dal collo in giù, sì che 'n su lo scoperto
si ravvolgëa infino al giro quinto.
"Questo superbo volle esser esperto
di sua potenza contra 'l sommo Giove,"
disse 'l mio duca, "ond' elli ha cotal merto.
Fïalte ha nome, e fece le gran prove
quando i giganti fer paura a' dèi;
le braccia ch'el menò, già mai non move."
E io a lui: "S'esser puote, io vorrei
che de lo smisurato Brïareo
esperïenza avesser li occhi mei."
Ond' ei rispuose: "Tu vedrai Anteo
presso di qui che parla ed è disciolto,
che ne porrà nel fondo d'ogne reo.
Quel che tu vuo' veder, più là è molto
ed è legato e fatto come questo,
salvo che più feroce par nel volto."
Non fu tremoto già tanto rubesto,
che scotesse una torre così forte,
come Fïalte a scuotersi fu presto.
Allor temett' io più che mai la morte,
e non v'era mestier più che la dotta,
s'io non avessi viste le ritorte.
Noi procedemmo più avante allotta,
e venimmo ad Anteo, che ben cinque alle,
sanza la testa, uscia fuor de la grotta.
"O tu che ne la fortunata valle
che fece Scipïon di gloria reda,
quand' Anibàl co' suoi diede le spalle,

who took a thousand lions as your prey—
and had you been together with your brothers
in their high war, it seems some still believe
the sons of earth would have become the victors—
do set us down below, where cold shuts in
Cocytus, and do not disdain that task.
Don't send us on to Tityus or Typhon;
this man can give you what is longed for here;
therefore bend down and do not curl your lip.
He still can bring you fame within the world,
for he's alive and still expects long life,
unless grace summon him before his time."
So said my master; and in haste Antaeus
stretched out his hands, whose massive grip had once
been felt by Hercules, and grasped my guide.
And Virgil, when he felt himself caught up,
called out to me: "Come here, so I can hold you,"
then made one bundle of himself and me.
Just as the Garisenda seems when seen
beneath the leaning side, when clouds run past
and it hangs down as if about to crash,
so did Antaeus seem to me as I
watched him bend over me—a moment when
I'd have preferred to take some other road.
But gently—on the deep that swallows up
both Lucifer and Judas—he placed us;
nor did he, so bent over, stay there long,
but, like a mast above a ship, he rose.

recasti già mille leon per preda,
e che, se fossi stato a l'alta guerra
de' tuoi fratelli, ancor par che si creda
ch'avrebber vinto i figli de la terra:
mettine giù, e non ten vegna schifo,
dove Cocito la freddura serra.
Non ci fare ire a Tizio né a Tifo:
questi può dar di quel che qui si brama;
però ti china e non torcer lo grifo.
Ancor ti può nel mondo render fama,
ch'el vive, e lunga vita ancor aspetta
se 'nnanzi tempo grazia a sé nol chiama."
Così disse 'l maestro; e quelli in fretta
le man distese, e prese 'l duca mio,
ond' Ercule sentì già grande stretta.
Virgilio, quando prender si sentio,
disse a me: "Fatti qua, sì ch'io ti prenda";
poi fece sì ch'un fascio era elli e io.
Qual pare a riguardar la Carisenda
sotto 'l chinato, quando un nuvol vada
sov'r essa sì, ched ella incontro penda:
tal parve Antëo a me che stava a bada
di vederlo chinare, e fu tal ora
ch'i' avrei voluto ir per altra strada.
Ma lievemente al fondo che divora
Lucifero con Giuda, ci sposò;
né, sì chinato, lì fece dimora,
e come albero in nave si levò.

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CANTO XXXII

Had I the crude and scrannel rhymes to suit
the melancholy hole upon which all
the other circling crags converge and rest,
  the juice of my conception would be pressed
more fully; but because I feel their lack,
I bring myself to speak, yet speak in fear;
  for it is not a task to take in jest,
to show the base of all the universe—
nor for a tongue that cries out, "mama," "papa."
  But may those ladies now sustain my verse
who helped Amphion when he walled up Thebes,
so that my tale not differ from the fact.
  O rabble, miscreated past all others,
there in the place of which it's hard to speak,
better if here you had been goats or sheep!
  When we were down below in the dark well,
beneath the giant's feet and lower yet,
with my eyes still upon the steep embankment,
  I heard this said to me: "Watch how you pass;
walk so that you not trample with your soles
the heads of your exhausted, wretched brothers."
  At this I turned and saw in front of me,
beneath my feet, a lake that, frozen fast,
had lost the look of water and seemed glass.
  The Danube where it flows in Austria,
the Don beneath its frozen sky, have never
made for their course so thick a veil in winter
  as there was here; for had Mount Tambernic
or Pietrapana's mountain crashed upon it,
not even at the edge would it have creaked.
  And as the croaking frog sits with its muzzle
above the water, in the season when
the peasant woman often dreams of gleaning,

The Ninth Circle, First Ring, called Caïna, where Traitors to their Kin are immersed in the ice, heads bent down. Camiscione dei Pazzi. The Second Ring, called Antenora: the Traitors to their Homeland or Party. Bocca degli Abati's provocation of Dante. Two traitors, one gnawing at the other's head.

S'io avessi le rime aspre e chiocce,
come si converrebbe al tristo buco
sovra 'l qual pontan tutte l'altre rocce,
io premerei di mio concetto il suco
più pienamente; ma perch' io non l'abbo,
non sanza tema a dicer mi conduco;
ché non è impresa da pigliare a gabbo
discriver fondo a tutto l'universo,
né da lingua che chiami mamma o babbo.
Ma quelle donne aiutino il mio verso
ch'aiutaro Anfïone a chiuder Tebe,
sì che dal fatto il dir non sia diverso.
Oh sovra tutte mal creata plebe
che stai nel loco onde parlare è duro,
mei foste state qui pecore o zebe!
Come noi fummo giù nel pozzo scuro
sotto i piè del gigante assai più bassi,
e io mirava ancora a l'alto muro,
dicere udi'mi: "Guarda come passi:
va sì, che tu non calchi con le piante
le teste de' fratei miseri lassi."
Per ch'io mi volsi, e vidimi davante
e sotto i piedi un lago che per gelo
avea di vetro e non d'acqua sembiante.
Non fece al corso suo sì grosso velo
di verno la Danoia in Osterlicchi,
né Tanaï là sotto 'l freddo cielo,
com' era quivi; che se Tambernicchi
vi fosse sù caduto, o Pietrapana,
non avria pur da l'orlo fatto cricchi.
E come a gracidar si sta la rana
col muso fuor de l'acqua, quando sogna
di spigolar sovente la villana,

so, livid in the ice, up to the place
where shame can show itself, were those sad shades,
whose teeth were chattering with notes like storks'.
Each kept his face bent downward steadily;
their mouths bore witness to the cold they felt,
just as their eyes proclaimed their sorry hearts.
When I had looked around a while, my eyes
turned toward my feet and saw two locked so close,
the hair upon their heads had intermingled.
"Do tell me, you whose chests are pressed so tight,"
I said, "who are you?" They bent back their necks,
and when they'd lifted up their faces toward me,
their eyes, which wept upon the ground before,
shed tears down on their lips until the cold
held fast the tears and locked their lids still more.
No clamp has ever fastened plank to plank
so tightly; and because of this, they butted
each other like two rams, such was their fury.
And one from whom the cold had taken both
his ears, who kept his face bent low, then said:
"Why do you keep on staring so at us?
If you would like to know who these two are:
that valley where Bisenzio descends,
belonged to them and to their father Alberto.
They came out of one body; and you can
search all Caïna, you will never find
a shade more fit to sit within this ice—
not him who, at one blow, had chest and shadow
shattered by Arthur's hand; and not Focaccia;
and not this sinner here who so impedes
my vision with his head, I can't see past him;
his name was Sassol Mascheroni; if
you're Tuscan, now you know who he has been.
And lest you keep me talking any longer,
know that I was Camiscion de' Pazzi;
I'm waiting for Carlino to absolve me."
And after that I saw a thousand faces
made doglike by the cold; for which I shudder—
and always will—when I face frozen fords.
And while we were advancing toward the center
to which all weight is drawn—I, shivering
in that eternally cold shadow—I

livide, insin là dove appar vergogna
eran l'ombre dolenti ne la ghiaccia,
mettendo i denti in nota di cicogna.
Ognuna in giù tenea volta la faccia;
da bocca il freddo, e da li occhi il cor tristo
tra lor testimonianza si procaccia.
Quand' io m'ebbi dintorno alquanto visto,
volsimi a' piedi, e vidi due sì stretti,
che 'l pel del capo avieno insieme misto.
"Ditemi, voi che sì strignete i petti,"
diss' io, "chi siete?" E quei piegaro i colli;
e poi ch'ebber li visi a me eretti,
li occhi lor, ch'eran pria pur dentro molli,
gocciar su per le labbra, e 'l gelo strinse
le lagrime tra essi e riserrolli.
Con legno legno spranga mai non cinse
forte così; ond' ei come due becchi
cozzaro insieme, tanta ira li vinse.
E un ch'avea perduti ambo li orecchi
per la freddura, pur col viso in giùe,
disse: "Perché cotanto in noi ti specchi?
Se vuoi saper chi son cotesti due,
la valle onde Bisenzo si dichina
del padre loro Alberto e di lor fue.
D'un corpo usciro; e tutta la Caina
potrai cercare, e non troverai ombra
degna più d'esser fitta in gelatina:
non quelli a cui fu rotto il petto e l'ombra
con esso un colpo per la man d'Artù;
non Focaccia; non questi che m'ingombra
col capo sì, ch'i' non veggio oltre più,
e fu nomato Sassol Mascheroni;
se tosco se', ben sai omai chi fu.
E perché non mi metti in più sermoni,
sappi ch'i' fu' il Camiscion de' Pazzi;
e aspetto Carlin che mi scagioni."
Poscia vid' io mille visi cagnazzi
fatti per freddo; onde mi vien riprezzo,
e verrà sempre, de' gelati guazzi.
E mentre ch'andavamo inver' lo mezzo
al quale ogne gravezza si rauna,
e io tremava ne l'etterno rezzo;

know not if it was will or destiny
or chance, but as I walked among the heads,
I struck my foot hard in the face of one.
Weeping, he chided then: "Why trample me?
If you've not come to add to the revenge
of Montaperti, why do you molest me?"
And I: "My master, now wait here for me,
that I may clear up just one doubt about him;
then you can make me hurry as you will."
My guide stood fast, and I went on to ask
of him who still was cursing bitterly:
"Who are you that rebukes another so?"
"And who are you who go through Antenora,
striking the cheeks of others," he replied,
"too roughly—even if you were alive?"
"I am alive, and can be precious to you
if you want fame," was my reply, "for I
can set your name among my other notes."
And he to me: "I want the contrary;
so go away and do not harass me—
your flattery is useless in this valley."
At that I grabbed him by the scruff and said:
"You'll have to name yourself to me or else
you won't have even one hair left up here."
And he to me: "Though you should strip me bald,
I shall not tell you who I am or show it,
not if you pound my head a thousand times."
His hairs were wound around my hand already,
and I had plucked from him more than one tuft
while he was barking and his eyes stared down,
when someone else cried out: "What is it, Bocca?
Isn't the music of your jaws enough
for you without your bark? What devil's at you?"
"And now," I said, "you traitor bent on evil,
I do not need your talk, for I shall carry
true news of you, and that will bring you shame."
"Be off," he answered; "tell them what you like,
but don't be silent, if you make it back,
about the one whose tongue was now so quick.
Here he laments the silver of the Frenchmen;
'I saw,' you then can say, 'him of Duera,
down there, where all the sinners are kept cool.'

se voler fu o destino o fortuna,
non so; ma, passeggiando tra le teste,
forte percossi 'l piè nel viso ad una.
Piangendo mi sgridò: "Perché mi peste?
se tu non vieni a crescer la vendetta
di Montaperti, perché mi moleste?"
E io: "Maestro mio, or qui m'aspetta,
sì ch'io esca d'un dubbio per costui;
poi mi farai, quantunque vorrai, fretta."
Lo duca stette, e io dissi a colui
che bestemmiava duramente ancora:
"Qual se' tu che così rampogni altrui?"
"Or tu chi se' che vai per l'Antenora,
percotendo," rispuose, "altrui le gote,
sì che, se fossi vivo, troppo fora?"
"Vivo son io, e caro esser ti puote,"
fu mia risposta,"se dimandi fama,
ch'io metta il nome tuo tra l'altra note."
Ed elli a me: "Del contrario ho io brama.
Lèvati quinci e non mi dar più lagna,
ché mal sai lusingar per questa lama!"
Allor lo presi per la cuticagna
e dissi: "El converrà che tu ti nomi,
o che capel qui sù non ti rimagna."
Ond' elli a me: "Perché tu mi dischiomi,
né ti dirò ch'io sia, né mosterrolti
se mille fiate in sul capo mi tomi."
Io avea già i capelli in mano avvolti,
e tratti glien' avea più d'una ciocca,
latrando lui con li occhi in giù raccolti,
quando un altro gridò: "Che hai tu, Bocca?
non ti basta sonar con le mascelle,
se tu non latri? qual diavol ti tocca?"
"Omai," diss' io, "non vo' che più favelle,
malvagio traditor; ch'a la tua onta
io porterò di te vere novelle."
"Va via," rispuose, "e ciò che tu vuoi conta;
ma non tacer, se tu di qua entro eschi,
di quel ch'ebbe or così la lingua pronta,
El piange qui l'argento de' Franceschi:
'Io vidi,' potrai dir, 'quel da Duera
là dove i peccatori stanno freschi.'

And if you're asked who else was there in ice,
one of the Beccheria is beside you—
he had his gullet sliced right through by Florence.
Gianni de' Soldanieri, I believe,
lies there with Ganelon and Tebaldello,
he who unlocked Faenza while it slept."
We had already taken leave of him,
when I saw two shades frozen in one hole,
so that one's head served as the other's cap;
and just as he who's hungry chews his bread,
one sinner dug his teeth into the other
right at the place where brain is joined to nape:
no differently had Tydeus gnawed the temples
of Menalippus, out of indignation,
than this one chewed the skull and other parts.
"O you who show, with such a bestial sign,
your hatred for the one on whom you feed,
tell me the cause," I said; "we can agree
that if your quarrel with him is justified,
then knowing who you are and what's his sin,
I shall repay you yet on earth above,
if that with which I speak does not dry up."

Se fossi domandato 'Altri chi v'era?'
tu hai dallato quel di Beccheria
di cui segò Fiorenza la gorgiera.
Gianni de' Soldanier credo che sia
più là con Ganellone e Tebaldello,
ch'aprì Faenza quando si dormia."
Noi eravam partiti già da ello,
ch'io vidi due ghiacciati in una buca,
sì che l'un capo a l'altro era cappello;
e come 'l pan per fame si manduca,
così 'l sovran li denti a l'altro pose
là 've 'l cervel s'aggiugne con la nuca:
non altrimenti Tidëo si rose
le tempie a Menalippo per disdegno,
che quei faceva il teschio e l'altre cose.
"O tu che mostri per sì bestial segno
odio sovra colui che tu ti mangi,
dimmi 'l perché," diss' io, "per tal convegno,
che se tu a ragion di lui ti piangi,
sappiendo chi voi siete e la sua pecca,
nel mondo suso ancora io te ne cangi,
se quella con ch'io parlo non si secca."

CANTO XXXIII

That sinner raised his mouth from his fierce meal,
then used the head that he had ripped apart
in back: he wiped his lips upon its hair.
  Then he began: "You want me to renew
despairing pain that presses at my heart
even as I think back, before I speak.
  But if my words are seed from which the fruit
is infamy for this betrayer whom
I gnaw, you'll see me speak and weep at once.
  I don't know who you are or in what way
you've come down here; and yet you surely seem—
from what I hear—to be a Florentine.
  You are to know I was Count Ugolino,
and this one here, Archbishop Ruggieri;
and now I'll tell you why I am his neighbor.
  There is no need to tell you that, because
of his malicious tricks, I first was taken
and then was killed—since I had trusted him;
  however, that which you cannot have heard—
that is, the cruel death devised for me—
you now shall hear and know if he has wronged me.
  A narrow hole, a window in the cage
which takes its name from me, the Cage of Hunger,
a tower where still others will be locked,
  had, through its opening, already showed me
several moons, when I dreamed that bad dream
which rent the curtain of the future for me.
  This man appeared to me as lord and master;
he hunted down the wolf and its young whelps
upon the mountain that prevents the Pisans
  from seeing Lucca; and with lean and keen
and practiced hounds, he'd sent up front, before him,
Gualandi and Sismondi and Lanfranchi.

Still the Ninth Circle, Second Ring. Ugolino's tale of his and his sons' death in a Pisan prison. Dante's invective against Pisa. The Third Ring, Ptolomea, where Traitors against their Guests jut out from ice, their eyes sealed by frozen tears. Fra Alberigo and Branca Doria, still alive on earth but already in Hell.

La bocca sollevò dal fiero pasto
quel peccator, forbendola a' capelli
del capo ch'elli avea di retro guasto.
Poi cominciò: "Tu vuo' ch'io rinovelli
disperato dolor che 'l cor mi preme
già pur pensando, pria ch'io ne favelli.
Ma se le mie parole esser dien seme
che frutti infamia al traditor ch'i' rodo,
parlare e lagrimar vedrai insieme.
Io non so chi tu se' né per che modo
venuto se' qua giù; ma fiorentino
mi sembri veramente quand' io t'odo.
Tu dei saper ch'i' fui conte Ugolino,
e questi è l'arcivescovo Ruggieri:
or ti dirò perché i son tal vicino.
Che per l'effetto de' suo' mai pensieri,
fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso
e poscia morto, dir non è mestieri;
però quel che non puoi avere inteso,
cioè come la morte mia fu cruda,
udirai, e saprai s'e' m'ha offeso.
Breve pertugio dentro da la Muda,
la qual per me ha 'l titol de la fame,
e che conviene ancor ch'altrui si chiuda,
m'avea mostrato per lo suo forame
più lune già, quand' io feci 'l mal sonno
che del futuro mi squarciò 'l velame.
Questi pareva a me maestro e donno,
cacciando il lupo e ' lupicini al monte
per che i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno.
Con cagne magre, studïose e conte
Gualandi con Sismondi e con Lanfranchi
s'avea messi dinanzi da la fronte.

But after a brief course, it seemed to me
that both the father and the sons were weary;
I seemed to see their flanks torn by sharp fangs.
When I awoke at daybreak, I could hear
my sons, who were together with me there,
weeping within their sleep, asking for bread.
You would be cruel indeed if, thinking what
my heart foresaw, you don't already grieve;
and if you don't weep now, when would you weep?
They were awake by now; the hour drew near
at which our food was usually brought,
and each, because of what he'd dreamed, was anxious;
below, I heard them nailing up the door
of that appalling tower; without a word,
I looked into the faces of my sons.
I did not weep; within, I turned to stone.
They wept; and my poor little Anselm said:
'Father, you look so . . . What is wrong with you?'
At that I shed no tears and—all day long
and through the night that followed—did not answer
until another sun had touched the world.
As soon as a thin ray had made its way
into that sorry prison, and I saw,
reflected in four faces, my own gaze,
out of my grief, I bit at both my hands;
and they, who thought I'd done that out of hunger,
immediately rose and told me: 'Father,
it would be far less painful for us if
you ate of us; for you clothed us in this
sad flesh—it is for you to strip it off.'
Then I grew calm, to keep them from more sadness;
through that day and the next, we all were silent;
O hard earth, why did you not open up?
But after we had reached the fourth day, Gaddo,
throwing himself, outstretched, down at my feet,
implored me: 'Father, why do you not help me?'
And there he died; and just as you see me,
I saw the other three fall one by one
between the fifth day and the sixth; at which,
now blind, I started groping over each;
and after they were dead, I called them for
two days; then fasting had more force than grief."

In picciol corso mi parieno stanchi
lo padre e ' figli, e con l'agute scane
mi parea lor veder fender li fianchi.
Quando fui desto innanzi la dimane,
pianger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli
ch'eran con meco, e dimandar del pane.
Ben se' crudel, se tu già non ti duoli
pensando ciò che 'l mio cor s'annunziava;
e se non piangi, di che pianger suoli?
Già eran desti, e l'ora s'appressava
che 'l cibo ne solëa essere addotto,
e per suo sogno ciascun dubitava;
e io senti' chiavar l'uscio di sotto
a l'orribile torre; ond' io guardai
nel viso a' mie' figliuoi sanza far motto.
Io non piangëa, sì dentro impetrai:
piangevan elli; e Anselmuccio mio
disse: 'Tu guardi sì, padre! che hai?'
Perciò non lagrimai né rispuos' io
tutto quel giorno né la notte appresso,
infin che l'altro sol nel mondo uscìo.
Come un poco di raggio si fu messo
nel doloroso carcere, e io scorsi
per quattro visi il mio aspetto stesso,
ambo le man per lo dolor mi morsi;
ed ei, pensando ch'io 'l fessi per voglia
di manicar, di sùbito levorsi
e disser: 'Padre, assai ci fia men doglia
se tu mangi di noi: tu ne vestisti
queste misere carni, e tu le spoglia.'
Queta'mi allor per non farli più tristi;
lo dì e l'altro stemmo tutti muti;
ahi dura terra, perché non t'apristi?
Poscia che fummo al quarto dì venuti,
Gaddo mi si gittò disteso a' piedi,
dicendo: 'Padre mio, ché non m'aiuti?'
Quivi morì; e come tu mi vedi,
vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
tra 'l quinto dì e 'l sesto; ond' io mi diedi,
già cieco, a brancolar sovra ciascuno,
e due dì li chiamai, poi che fur morti.
Poscia, più che 'l dolor, poté 'l digiuno."

When he had spoken this, with eyes awry,
again he gripped the sad skull in his teeth,
which, like a dog's, were strong down to the bone.
Ah, Pisa, you the scandal of the peoples
of that fair land where *sì* is heard, because
your neighbors are so slow to punish you,
may, then, Caprara and Gorgona move
and build a hedge across the Arno's mouth,
so that it may drown every soul in you!
For if Count Ugolino was reputed
to have betrayed your fortresses, there was
no need to have his sons endure such torment.
O Thebes renewed, their years were innocent
and young—Brigata, Uguiccione, and
the other two my song has named above!
We passed beyond, where frozen water wraps—
a rugged covering—still other sinners,
who were not bent, but flat upon their backs.
Their very weeping there won't let them weep,
and grief that finds a barrier in their eyes
turns inward to increase their agony;
because their first tears freeze into a cluster,
and, like a crystal visor, fill up all
the hollow that is underneath the eyebrow.
And though, because of cold, my every sense
had left its dwelling in my face, just as
a callus has no feeling, nonetheless,
I seemed to feel some wind now, and I said:
"My master, who has set this gust in motion?
For isn't every vapor quenched down here?"
And he to me: "You soon shall be where your
own eye will answer that, when you shall see
the reason why this wind blasts from above."
And one of those sad sinners in the cold
crust, cried to us: "O souls who are so cruel
that this last place has been assigned to you,
take off the hard veils from my face so that
I can release the suffering that fills
my heart before lament freezes again."
To which I answered: "If you'd have me help you,
then tell me who you are; if I don't free you,
may I go to the bottom of the ice."

Quand' ebbe detto ciò, con li occhi torti
riprese 'l teschio misero co' denti,
che furo a l'osso, come d'un can, forti.
Ahi Pisa, vituperio de le genti
del bel paese là dove 'l sì suona,
poi che i vicini a te punir son lenti,
muovasi la Capraia e la Gorgona,
e faccian siepe ad Arno in su la foce,
sì ch'elli annieghi in te ogne persona!
Che se 'l conte Ugolino aveva voce
d'aver tradita te de le castella,
non dovei tu i figliuoi porre a tal croce.
Innocenti facea l'età novella,
novella Tebe, Uguiccione e 'l Brigata
e li altri due che 'l canto suso appella.
Noi passammo oltre, là 've la gelata
ruvidamente un'altra gente fascia,
non volta in giù, ma tutta riversata.
Lo pianto stesso lì pianger non lascia,
e 'l duol che truova in su li occhi rintoppo,
si volge in entro a far crescer l'ambascia;
ché le lagrime prime fanno groppo,
e sì come visiere di cristallo,
rïempion sotto 'l ciglio tutto il coppo.
E avvegna che, sì come d'un callo,
per la freddura ciascun sentimento
cessato avesse del mio viso stallo,
già mi parea sentire alquanto vento;
per ch'io: "Maestro mio, questo chi move?
non è qua giù ogne vapore spento?"
Ond' elli a me: "Avaccio sarai dove
di ciò farà l'occhio la risposta,
veggendo la cagion che 'l fiato piove."
E un de' tristi de la fredda crosta
gridò a noi: "O anime crudeli
tanto che data v'è l'ultima posta,
levatemi dal viso i duri veli,
sì ch'ïo sfoghi 'l duol che 'l cor m'impregna,
un poco, pria che 'l pianto si raggeli."
Per ch'io a lui: "Se vuo' ch'i' ti sovvegna,
dimmi chi se', e s'io non ti disbrigo,
al fondo de la ghiaccia ir mi convegna."

He answered then: "I am Fra Alberigo,
the one who tended fruits in a bad garden,
and here my figs have been repaid with dates."
"But then," I said, "are you already dead?"
And he to me: "I have no knowledge of
my body's fate within the world above.
For Ptolomea has this privilege:
quite frequently the soul falls here before
it has been thrust away by Atropos.
And that you may with much more willingness
scrape these glazed tears from off my face, know this:
as soon as any soul becomes a traitor,
as I was, then a demon takes its body
away—and keeps that body in his power
until its years have run their course completely.
The soul falls headlong, down into this cistern;
and up above, perhaps, there still appears
the body of the shade that winters here
behind me; you must know him, if you've just
come down; he is Ser Branca Doria;
for many years he has been thus pent up."
I said to him: "I think that you deceive me,
for Branca Doria is not yet dead;
he eats and drinks and sleeps and puts on clothes."
"There in the Malebranche's ditch above,
where sticky pitch boils up, Michele Zanche
had still not come," he said to me, "when this one—
together with a kinsman, who had done
the treachery together with him—left
a devil in his stead inside his body.
But now reach out your hand; open my eyes."
And yet I did not open them for him;
and it was courtesy to show him rudeness.
Ah, Genoese, a people strange to every
constraint of custom, full of all corruption,
why have you not been driven from the world?
For with the foulest spirit of Romagna,
I found one of you such that, for his acts,
in soul he bathes already in Cocytus
and up above appears alive, in body.

Rispuose adunque: "I' son frate Alberigo;
i' son quel da le frutta del mal orto,
che qui riprendo dattero per figo."
"Oh," diss' io lui, "or se' tu ancor morto?"
Ed elli a me: "Come 'l mio corpo stea
nel mondo sù, nulla scïenza porto.
Cotal vantaggio ha questa Tolomea,
che spesse volte l'anima ci cade
innanzi ch'Atropòs mossa le dea.
E perché tu più volontier mi rade
le 'nvetrïate lagrime dal volto,
sappie che, tosto che l'anima trade
come fec' ïo, il corpo suo l' è tolto
da un demonio, che poscia il governa
mentre che 'l tempo suo tutto sia vòlto.
Ella ruina in sì fatta cisterna;
e forse pare ancor lo corpo suso
de l'ombra che di qua dietro mi verna.
Tu 'l dei saper, se tu vien pur mo giuso:
elli è ser Branca Doria, e son più anni
poscia passati ch'el fu sì racchiuso."
"Io credo," diss' io lui, "che tu m'inganni;
ché Branca Doria non morì unquanche,
e mangia e bee e dorme e veste panni."
"Nel fosso sù," diss' el, "de' Malebranche,
là dove bolle la tenace pece,
non era ancor giunto Michel Zanche,
che questi lasciò il diavolo in sua vece
nel corpo suo, ed un suo prossimano
che 'l tradimento insieme con lui fece.
Ma distendi oggimai in qua la mano;
aprimi li occhi." E io non gliel' apersi;
e cortesia fu lui esser villano.
Ahi Genovesi, uomini diversi
d'ogne costume e pien d'ogne magagna,
perché non siete voi del mondo spersi?
Ché col peggiore spirto di Romagna
trovai di voi un tal, che per sua opra
in anima in Cocito già si bagna,
e in corpo par vivo ancor di sopra.

CANTO XXXIV

"*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*
toward us; and therefore keep your eyes ahead,"
my master said, "to see if you can spy him."
  Just as, when night falls on our hemisphere
or when a heavy fog is blowing thick,
a windmill seems to wheel when seen far off,
  so then I seemed to see that sort of structure.
And next, because the wind was strong, I shrank
behind my guide; there was no other shelter.
  And now—with fear I set it down in meter—
I was where all the shades were fully covered
but visible as wisps of straw in glass.
  There some lie flat and others stand erect,
one on his head, and one upon his soles;
and some bend face to feet, just like a bow.
  But after we had made our way ahead,
my master felt he now should have me see
that creature who was once a handsome presence;
  he stepped aside and made me stop, and said:
"Look! Here is Dis, and this the place where you
will have to arm yourself with fortitude."
  O reader, do not ask of me how I
grew faint and frozen then—I cannot write it:
all words would fall far short of what it was.
  I did not die, and I was not alive;
think for yourself, if you have any wit,
what I became, deprived of life and death.
  The emperor of the despondent kingdom
so towered from the ice, up from midchest,
that I match better with a giant's breadth
  than giants match the measure of his arms;
now you can gauge the size of all of him
if it is in proportion to such parts.

The Ninth Circle, Fourth Ring, called Judecca, where Traitors against their Benefactors are fully covered by ice. Dis, or Lucifer, emperor of that kingdom, his three mouths rending Judas, Brutus, and Cassius. Descent of Virgil and Dante down Lucifer's body to the other, southern hemisphere. Their vision of the stars.

"*Vexilla regis prodeunt inferni*
verso di noi; però dinanzi mira,"
disse 'l maestro mio, "se tu 'l discerni."
Come quando una grossa nebbia spira,
o quando l'emisperio nostro annotta,
par di lungi un molin che 'l vento gira,
veder mi parve un tal dificio allotta;
poi per lo vento mi ristrinsi retro
al duca mio, ché non lì era altra grotta.
Già era, e con paura il metto in metro,
là dove l'ombre tutte eran coperte,
e trasparien come festuca in vetro.
Altre sono a giacere; altre stanno erte,
quella col capo e quella con le piante;
altra, com' arco, il volto a' piè rinverte.
Quando noi fummo fatti tanto avante,
ch'al mio maestro piacque di mostrarmi
la creatura ch'ebbe il bel sembiante,
d'innanzi mi si tolse e fé restarmi,
"Ecco Dite," dicendo, "ed ecco il loco
ove convien che di fortezza t'armi."
Com' io divenni allor gelato e fioco,
nol dimandar, lettor, ch'i' non lo scrivo,
però ch'ogne parlar sarebbe poco.
Io non mori' e non rimasi vivo;
pensa oggimai per te, s'hai fior d'ingegno,
qual io divenni, d'uno e d'altro privo.
Lo 'mperador del doloroso regno
da mezzo 'l petto uscia fuor de la ghiaccia;
e più con un gigante io mi convegno,
che i giganti non fan con le sue braccia:
vedi oggimai quant' esser dee quel tutto
ch'a così fatta parte si confaccia.

If he was once as handsome as he now
is ugly and, despite that, raised his brows
against his Maker, one can understand
how every sorrow has its source in him!
I marveled when I saw that, on his head,
he had three faces: one—in front—bloodred;
and then another two that, just above
the midpoint of each shoulder, joined the first;
and at the crown, all three were reattached;
the right looked somewhat yellow, somewhat white;
the left in its appearance was like those
who come from where the Nile, descending, flows.
Beneath each face of his, two wings spread out,
as broad as suited so immense a bird:
I've never seen a ship with sails so wide.
They had no feathers, but were fashioned like
a bat's; and he was agitating them,
so that three winds made their way out from him—
and all Cocytus froze before those winds.
He wept out of six eyes; and down three chins,
tears gushed together with a bloody froth.
Within each mouth—he used it like a grinder—
with gnashing teeth he tore to bits a sinner,
so that he brought much pain to three at once.
The forward sinner found that biting nothing
when matched against the clawing, for at times
his back was stripped completely of its hide.
"That soul up there who has to suffer most,"
my master said: "Judas Iscariot—
his head inside, he jerks his legs without.
Of those two others, with their heads beneath,
the one who hangs from that black snout is Brutus—
see how he writhes and does not say a word!
That other, who seems so robust, is Cassius.
But night is come again, and it is time
for us to leave; we have seen everything."
Just as he asked, I clasped him round the neck;
and he watched for the chance of time and place,
and when the wings were open wide enough,
he took fast hold upon the shaggy flanks
and then descended, down from tuft to tuft,
between the tangled hair and icy crusts.

S'el fu sì bel com' elli è ora brutto,
e contra 'l suo fattore alzò le ciglia,
ben dee da lui procedere ogne lutto.
Oh quanto parve a me gran maraviglia
quand' io vidi tre facce a la sua testa!
L'una dinanzi, e quella era vermiglia;
l'altr' eran due, che s'aggiugnieno a questa
sovresso 'l mezzo di ciascuna spalla,
e sé giugnieno al loco de la cresta:
e la destra parea tra bianca e gialla;
la sinistra a vedere era tal, quali
vegnon di là onde 'l Nilo s'avvalla.
Sotto ciascuna uscivan due grand' ali,
quanto si convenia a tanto uccello:
vele di mar non vid' io mai cotali.
Non avean penne, ma di vispistrello
era lor modo; e quelle svolazzava,
sì che tre venti si movean da ello:
quindi Cocito tutto s'aggelava.
Con sei occhi piangëa, e per tre menti
gocciava 'l pianto e sanguinosa bava.
Da ogne bocca dirompea co' denti
un peccatore, a guisa di maciulla,
sì che tre ne facea così dolenti.
A quel dinanzi il mordere era nulla
verso 'l graffiar, che tal volta la schiena
rimanea de la pelle tutta brulla.
"Quell' anima là sù c'ha maggior pena,"
disse 'l maestro, "è Giuda Scarïotto,
che 'l capo ha dentro e fuor le gambe mena.
De li altri due c'hanno il capo di sotto,
quel che pende dal nero ceffo è Bruto:
vedi come si storce, e non fa motto!;
e l'altro è Cassio, che par sì membruto.
Ma la notte risurge, e oramai
è da partir, ché tutto avem veduto."
Com' a lui piacque, il collo li avvinghiai;
ed el prese di tempo e loco poste,
e quando l'ali fuoro aperte assai,
appigliò sé a le vellute coste;
di vello in vello giù discese poscia
tra 'l folto pelo e le gelate croste.

When we had reached the point at which the thigh
revolves, just at the swelling of the hip,
my guide, with heavy strain and rugged work,
reversed his head to where his legs had been
and grappled on the hair, as one who climbs—
I thought that we were going back to Hell.
"Hold tight," my master said—he panted like
a man exhausted—"it is by such stairs
that we must take our leave of so much evil."
Then he slipped through a crevice in a rock
and placed me on the edge of it, to sit;
that done, he climbed toward me with steady steps.
I raised my eyes, believing I should see
the half of Lucifer that I had left;
instead I saw him with his legs turned up;
and if I then became perplexed, do let
the ignorant be judges—those who can
not understand what point I had just crossed.
"Get up," my master said, "be on your feet:
the way is long, the path is difficult;
the sun's already back to middle tierce."
It was no palace hall, the place in which
we found ourselves, but with its rough-hewn floor
and scanty light, a dungeon built by nature.
"Before I free myself from this abyss,
master," I said when I had stood up straight,
"tell me enough to see I don't mistake:
Where is the ice? And how is he so placed
head downward? Tell me, too, how has the sun
in so few hours gone from night to morning?"
And he to me: "You still believe you are
north of the center, where I grasped the hair
of the damned worm who pierces through the world.
And you were there as long as I descended;
but when I turned, that's when you passed the point
to which, from every part, all weights are drawn.
And now you stand beneath the hemisphere
opposing that which cloaks the great dry lands
and underneath whose zenith died the Man
whose birth and life were sinless in this world.
Your feet are placed upon a little sphere
that forms the other face of the Judecca.

Quando noi fummo là dove la coscia
si volge, a punto in sul grosso de l'anche,
lo duca, con fatica e con angoscia,
volse la testa ov' elli avea le zanche,
e aggrappossi al pel com' om che sale,
sì che 'n inferno i' credea tornar anche.
"Attienti ben, ché per cotali scale,"
disse 'l maestro, ansando com' uom lasso,
"conviensi dipartir da tanto male."
Poi uscì fuor per lo fóro d'un sasso
e puose me in su l'orlo a sedere;
appresso porse a me l'accorto passo.
Io levai li occhi e credetti vedere
Lucifero com' io l'avea lasciato,
e vidili le gambe in sù tenere;
e s'io divenni allora travagliato,
la gente grossa il pensi, che non vede
qual è quel punto ch'io avea passato.
"Lèvati sù," disse 'l maestro, "in piede:
la via è lunga e 'l cammino è malvagio,
e già il sole a mezza terza riede."
Non era camminata di palagio
là 'v' eravam, ma natural burella
ch'avea mal suolo e di lume disagio.
"Prima ch'io de l'abisso mi divella,
maestro mio," diss' io quando fui dritto,
"a trarmi d'erro un poco mi favella:
ov' è la ghiaccia? e questi com' è fitto
sì sottosopra? e come, in sì poc' ora,
da sera a mane ha fatto il sol tragitto?"
Ed elli a me: "Tu imagini ancora
d'esser di là dal centro, ov' io mi presi
al pel del vermo reo che 'l mondo fóra.
Di là fosti cotanto quant' io scesi;
quand' io mi volsi, tu passasti 'l punto
al qual si traggon d'ogne parte i pesi.
E se' or sotto l'emisperio giunto
ch'è contraposto a quel che la gran secca
coverchia, e sotto 'l cui colmo consunto
fu l'uom che nacque e visse sanza pecca;
tu haï i piedi in su picciola spera
che l'altra faccia fa de la Giudecca.

Here it is morning when it's evening there;
and he whose hair has served us as a ladder
is still fixed, even as he was before.
This was the side on which he fell from Heaven;
for fear of him, the land that once loomed here
made of the sea a veil and rose into
our hemisphere; and that land which appears
upon this side—perhaps to flee from him—
left here this hollow space and hurried upward."
There is a place below, the limit of
that cave, its farthest point from Beelzebub,
a place one cannot see: it is discovered
by ear—there is a sounding stream that flows
along the hollow of a rock eroded
by winding waters, and the slope is easy.
My guide and I came on that hidden road
to make our way back into the bright world;
and with no care for any rest, we climbed—
he first, I following—until I saw,
through a round opening, some of those things
of beauty Heaven bears. It was from there
that we emerged, to see—once more—the stars.

Qui è da man, quando di là è sera;
e questi, che ne fé scala col pelo,
fitto è ancora sì come prim' era.
Da questa parte cadde giù dal cielo;
e la terra, che pria di qua si sporse,
per paura di lui fé del mar velo,
e venne a l'emisperio nostro; e forse
per fuggir lui lasciò qui loco vòto
quella ch'appar di qua, e sù ricorse."
Luogo è là giù da Belzebù remoto
tanto quanto la tomba si distende,
che non per vista, ma per suono è noto
d'un ruscelletto che quivi discende
per la buca d'un sasso, ch'elli ha roso,
col corso ch'elli avvolge, e poco pende.
Lo duca e io per quel cammino ascoso
intrammo a ritornar nel chiaro mondo;
e sanza cura aver d'alcun riposo,
salimmo sù, el primo e io secondo,
tanto ch'i' vidi de le cose belle
che porta 'l ciel, per un pertugio tondo.
E quindi uscimmo a riveder le stelle.


AMI
DANTE
NBM

A NOTE ON THE DRAWINGS FOR THE CALIFORNIA DANTE

Begin with *Liber Occasionum*: three books of drawings I maintain to chronicle special occasions in the lives of my three daughters. These drawings are simple and direct, quick and understated, personal and unselfconscious. They are intended for no public's eye. Allen Mandelbaum saw these drawings during a visit to my Northampton studio and subsequently asked me to do such "graphic meditations" to accompany his translation of *Inferno*.

That was over two years ago now. Work on the *Inferno* drawings began six months later. Though I worked on the drawings for over eighteen months, most of those which appear in this volume were, in fact, done during a single violently productive month—July, 1979. What follows is a brief account of their making.

As the work came into focus, I felt much apprehension and some fear in the face of my predecessors. For me, the company of Botticelli and Blake, Baskin and Lebrun, was awe-striking. That uneasiness made me self-conscious. I fretted over the temptation of borrowing their ideas and over the inevitable comparisons.

My apprehensions notwithstanding, the project began with the designing of the text and the determination of the subjects and sequence of the illustrations. To do this, Mandelbaum and I conferred and corresponded at length, compiling lists of iconographic ideas: traditional, obscure, some entirely new to *Inferno* iconography. Two predetermined limitations were imposed: one, that the drawings be literal, and two, that they work within a rigid format which would be organic with the gestalt of the book. Tight and restricted formats are repugnant to most contemporary artists, and illustrations pinned to specific references are not only enigmatic without the references, but also dance dangerously close to obvious and easy contrivance. Those self-imposed limitations not only danced that tightrope and enforced restrictions of format, but were an integral part of an attempt to break away from the craftless obscurity of imagery which has become fashionable and expected.

Within these restrictions I intended to produce fresh and spontaneous images that would stand on their own, full of life, celebrating craft, organic with text and format, and as "original" as anything in the contemporary repertoire.

From incipient thumbnail sketches which, with simple contours and quick gestures, suggested subject matter and composition, I realized that many ideas would demand visual resources I would not be able to cull from memory.

Avoiding twentieth-century predecessors, I studied Stradanus, Doré, Botticelli, Flaxman, and compiled a working library of resource materials which included, among other things, my own photographs made in the studio and out-of-doors. Many of the early ideas were conceptually immature, and subsequently fell by the way, though a few of the original impetuses survived, like pentimenti, throughout the project.

From this amalgam came a second series of drawings. My first attempts in this series were frustrated by the unavailability of proper paper. The familiar paper of *Liber Occasionum* was no longer available, sized as it once was — the new makings absorbed the washes, and the crisp integrity of the brush's mark was lost in a blotter.

Eventually, I happened upon a mould-made Fabriano which worked wonderfully well for the simple, elusive, and ephemeral style I anticipated. Retrospectively, I see that event as a critical point; then was the birth of Cerberus, of Manto, of the decapitated figure in Canto XXVIII — all seminal drawings for further figures, and highly reminiscent of the *Liber Occasionum* drawings. With Cerberus I knew that I had found the surface which would do what I wanted it to do. So the final drawings started. The gesture of each composition was stated first with a pencil, loosely blocking the arrangement and placement of figures, then *quickly* with large, oriental brushes, urgently dashed upon the paper, fully charged with clean, clear water—invisible gestures, as it were, over the pencil scaffolds. Into these invisible gestures I mingled dark washes and thick, black ink—the spontaneous and uncontrolled over the plotted and controlled through

an invisible responsive gesture. If the gesture were weak, the drawing architectonically dependent upon it developed no further. If the gesture were strong enough, I would work back into it with steelpoint and pencil, or I would scrape away with a sharp blade, adding and subtracting until a full statement had been accomplished. Typically, several potential images would have been produced. I explored each possibility simultaneously—three, four, five drawings on the board, eventually yielding two, then finally one. As often as not, that final decision was visceral, and at other times it was deliberate and conscious, calling on my past of plasticity, my knowledge of a lifetime.

This approach, it seems to me, is particularly appropriate to the text. The drawings dance as the language dances; they are expedient as Dante is expedient; they are quick and terse; and they are deeply rooted in tradition. I wanted this technique to produce images that Dante would have expected, both in tonality and virtuosity. Virtuosity is, after all, simplicity of means without sacrifice of meaning. Virtuosity in drawing lies in its directness, in its immediacy, in its innocence, and in its intimacy. Drawing is the most intimate of all means of human expression. Drawing is ritual and it is meditation. It employs simple, naive, and easily understood tools. It is catechetical. It is universal.

Northampton, Massachusetts
December, 1979

Barry Moser

ALLEN MANDELBAUM's verse volumes are: *Chelmaxioms: The Maxims, Axioms, Maxioms of Chelm*; *Leaves of Absence*; *A Lied of Letterpress*; *Journeyman*; and the forthcoming *The Savantasse of Montparnasse*. (The first two of these volumes are now being translated into Italian by A. Cima.) In addition to *The Aeneid of Virgil: A Verse Translation*, a University of California Press volume for which he won a National Book Award, his verse translations/editions include: *Life of a Man* by Giuseppe Ungaretti; *Selected Writings of Salvatore Quasimodo*; *Selected Poems of Giuseppe Ungaretti*; and the forthcoming *Mediterranean: Selected Poems of Eugenio Montale*. The general title of his selected verse translations will be *Targuman*, with the first three volumes devoted to modern Italian, Latin, and medieval Hebrew poetry, respectively. A recipient of the Order of Merit from the Republic of Italy, Mr Mandelbaum was in the Society of Fellows at Harvard University, a Rockefeller Fellow in Humanities, and a Fulbright Research Scholar in Italy. Since 1972, he has been Chairman of the English Department at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where he is Professor of English and Comparative Literature. On leaves away, he has been Hurst Professor at Washington University in St. Louis, Honors Professor of Humanities at the University of Houston, and Distinguished Humanist at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

BARRY MOSER was educated at Auburn University and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and did graduate studies at the University of Massachusetts. His work, which includes the books of Pennyroyal Press, is represented in many collections, museums, and libraries in the United States and abroad, among them, The British Museum, The Library of Congress, The New York Public Library, The National Library of Australia, The London College of Printing, Harvard University, Cambridge University, Princeton University. Mr Moser has exhibited internationally in both one-man and group exhibits. His illustrated books form a list of over fifty titles, including the Arion Press *Moby Dick*. In addition to being a designer, printer, wood engraver, and draughtsman, he is a member of the faculty of The Williston-Northampton School in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and lectures and often acts as visiting artist at universities across the country.

This volume of *The California Dante* was designed by Barry Moser and Czeslaw Jan Grycz. The typeface, Monotype Dante, was designed in 1957 by the late Giovanni Mardersteig and first used by him at the Officina Bodoni, Verona. The type was set by Michael and Winifred Bixler, Boston, Massachusetts. The paper is Mohawk Superfine, manufactured by the Mohawk Paper Mills, Cohoes, New York. The illustrations were reproduced by the three-dot process under the supervision of Charles Wood and were printed with the text by the Southeastern Printing Company, Stuart, Florida. This trade edition will be followed by a Pennyroyal/California bibliophiles' edition in five hundred signed and numbered copies of which twenty are reserved for the Schlesinger Foundation and its publisher, Pieraldo Editore, Socio Benemerito.

In addition to a volume containing an introduction, facing Italian text, and verse translation for each *cantica* of *The Divine Comedy*, the California Dante will include a separate volume of commentary for each *cantica*. The three commentary volumes, under the general editorship of Allen Mandelbaum, will constitute the *California Lectura Dantis*.

In these commentary volumes, each canto will be the subject of an essay/reading by one of a distinguished international group of participating scholar-critics. The thirty-three—or in the case of Inferno, thirty-four—canto readings in each volume will be supplemented by a comprehensive index-glossary and synoptic appendixes.

We are thus about to realize, and make accessible to the literary and scholarly community, the first complete *Lectura Dantis* commentary in English on *The Divine Comedy*.

Allen Mandelbaum, "precise and inspired poet" (*Parnassus*) and "acknowledged master of the translator's art" (*Choice*), won a National Book Award in 1973 for his verse translation of *The Aeneid of Virgil*, "a work of impressive inspiration and love . . . its understanding makes even the original a different experience." (*The* [London] *Times Educational Supplement*), "with wonderful loyalty to tone, as well as text, all through" (G. S. Fraser, *Partisan Review*).

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FORTHCOMING

In the same format
Purgatorio scheduled for publication, Fall 1981.
Paradiso scheduled for publication, Fall 1982.
The three volumes will be ready as a boxed set, Fall 1982.

A limited deluxe edition of *Inferno*,
250 sets (without Italian) will be available in 1981.
336 pages, 42 drawings.

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